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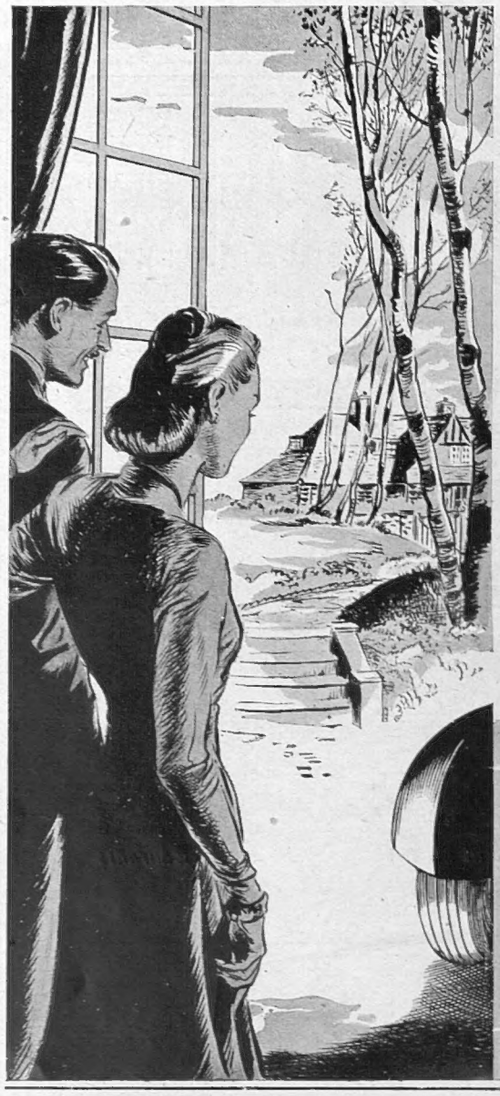

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Volume CLXXIV No. 2277 The SPHERE, London, September 11, 1943

THE SPHERE
With which is incorporated "THE GRAPHIC"
The Empire's Illustrated Weekly

A NOVEL METHOD IN THE PROPAGANDA OFFENSIVE AGAINST ITALY (WHERE OUR TROOPS HAVE NOW LANDED ON THE MAINLAND). This is carried out by means of leaflets fired by the 25-pounder guns of the Eighth Army into the enemy lines. A captain of the Intelligence Corps is here seen packing the rolled bundles of leaflets into the empty shell-cases before handing them over to the gunners

A new method of distributing propaganda leaflets among enemy troops has now been evolved by the Psychological Warfare Branch of the Eighth Army: it was developed during the course of the campaign in Sicily, and it is not unlikely that it may now be employed during the course of our present operations on the mainland of Italy, where our troops landed on September 3. The leaflets are printed on both sides of a single sheet of paper; they are packed in roll form into 25-pounder shell-cases. Each empty shell-case can hold two rolls of the leaflets, making a total of four hundred leaflets per shell. The projectile is designed to explode in the air over the enemy lines at a height of some three hundred feet: the leaflets then float down on their own to the ground, covering a wide area. They are printed in the appropriate language by a mobile printing press which travels with the Army, and thus a regular "news-service" can be sent over daily to the enemy's fighting troops, or to civilians in an area to be attacked, with instructions on what to do

[See also article on page 328 of this issue]

Postage—Inland, 2d.; Canada and Newfoundland, 1d.; Elsewhere Abroad, 1½d.

A WAR NEWSLETTER —No. 210

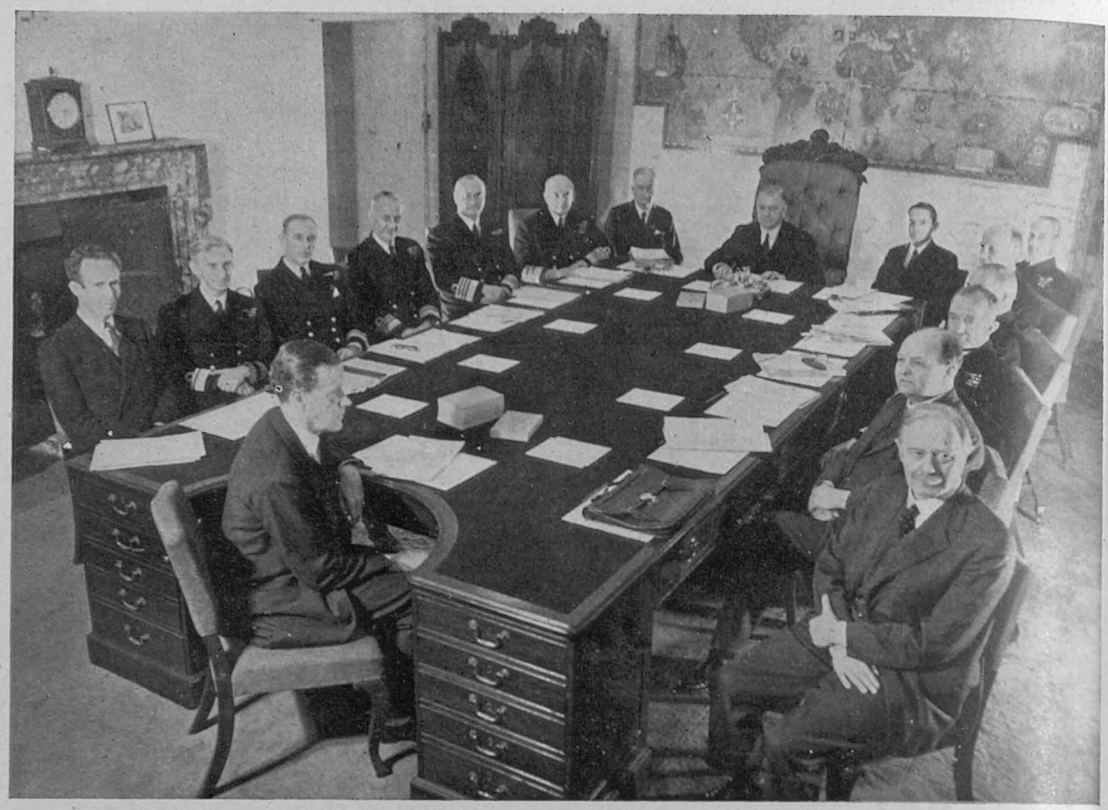
1, NEW OXFORD STREET, W.C.1.

Peace—and the Sword.—

The long-expected invasion of the Italian mainland was announced on the morrow of the Pope's broadcast appeal for "*Peace this Year.*" And that military event, whose progress the world will await with intense anxiety, may well contribute to the hastening of the end of war, which all men of goodwill desire and all the criminals of Europe no less urgently long for. The landing of the Eighth Army in Italy does indeed dot the "i's" and fill the lacunæ in the Vatican appeal. The whole world is sick of destruction, sick of cruelty and injustice and oppression and force and slavery, and, above all, of the hideous propaganda of hate and distorted fact which is the fourth fighting service of all combatants. It is an appeal which echoes longingly in the hearts of all sorts and conditions of men, that the nations at war should do nothing more to stimulate hate (which is slow to die) and the will to fight on among those who admit defeat. The invasion of Italy, if it prosper, may induce the Italians, who have made that admission first among the Axis warmongers, to conform to the Pope's clear guidance without further hesitancy, and to throw themselves on the mercy of God and outraged humanity. It is not rare for Heaven to choose men as the instruments of divine justice. It is a choice which demands greatness and magnanimity in the chosen instruments. An appeal such as is the Pope's latest effort makes mere nonsense under the present conditions of total war if it be read for what it says merely, and not for the pregnant sentences in invisible ink between the lines. The Pope said all it was possible for him to say. Between the lines he told the whole truth, as it is viewed in Heaven and will be judged in history. For the time being, it is the prime duty and responsibility of the Allies to enforce with the sword, ever more resolutely and relentlessly, the judgment of Heaven and of Man, that peace and decency, justice and security, may raise their heads again amid the ruins of our civilisation, laid waste by the forces of Barbarism. Until Barbarism makes the gesture of submission and throws itself on the mercy of God and man, it is "not peace but a sword." They that take the sword must and shall (and always do) perish by the sword, to be reborn and to seek readmission to the community of peoples who at least strive to make civilisation something more than a word of mockery.

Premier's Broadcast: Russian Section.—

It is rare to hear one of the Premier's great broadcasts uninfluenced by the magic of his delivery. When one does so hear it, one instantly appreciates how vitally important is the question of balance and proportion, and the exact allocation of space for this issue or that. It may have seemed to many listeners who heard John Snagge's reading that a disproportionate space was allotted to a reply to Russian criticism of the democracies' share in the final effort to overthrow Hitler. The arguments on both sides are well known to all, and clear enough and old enough. The Premier's "defence" indicated to all who heard it that this old "Second Front" plea from Russia has been much less "unofficial" than we supposed. Clearly it is not irresponsible, but a direct and constant urging from Stalin himself to Premier and President; and the catalogue of the difficulties in our way and the list of "business done" by the Western Allies have *not* satisfied Stalin any more than they have satisfied *Isvestia*



THE BOARD OF ADMIRALTY MEETS IN WHITEHALL: A new official photograph of the men who comprise the governing authority of the British Navy, in the historic Board Room in the Admiralty Building. (The original panelling of this famous Room has been removed for safety.)

From left to right in this picture are the following: nearest the camera, at the head of the table, is Lord Bruntisfield, M.C., Parliamentary Secretary; on the far side of the table from the left—Capt. R. A. Pilkington, M.C., M.P., Civil Lord; Rear-Admiral W. R. Patterson, C.B., C.V.O., Assistant Chief of Naval Staff; Rear-Admiral J. H. Edelston, C.B.E., Assistant Chief of Naval Staff; Vice-Admiral Sir E. Neville Syfret, K.C.B., Vice-Chief of Naval Staff; Admiral Sir Charles E. Kennedy-Purvis, K.C.B. Deputy First Sea Lord; Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound, O.M., G.C.B., G.C.V.O., First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff; Sir Sidney Barnes, K.B.E., C.B., Deputy Secretary; the Rt. Hon. A. V. Alexander, C.H., M.P., First Lord of the Admiralty—seated at head of table; Sir H. V. Markham, K.C.B., M.C., Permanent Secretary. Reading down from the top along the right side of the table—Vice-Admiral Sir William Whitworth, K.C.B., D.S.O., Second Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Personnel; Vice-Admiral Sir Frederick Wake-Walker, K.C.B., C.B.E., Third Sea Lord and Controller of the Navy; Vice-Admiral F. H. Pegram, C.B., D.S.O., Fourth Sea Lord and Chief of Supplies and Equipment; Rear-Admiral D. W. Boyd, C.B.E., D.S.C., Fifth Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Air Equipment; the Rt. Hon. G. H. Hall, M.P., Financial Secretary; and Sir James Lithgow, Bart., M.C., T.D., Controller of Shipbuilding

Werth, or the Army or the man in the street. In short, *tout comprendre* is not yet *tout pardonner* between Russia and her Allies on this burning question. It may not yet be too late to remove any sense of grievance which may persist in official quarters in Russia. No more likely assistance to this end exists than in further dazzling Russian victories. And while Churchill was speaking, the guns of Moscow were blowing off ammunition (designed to bring death to the invader) in a series of national celebrations of victory after victory—before Smolensk, in the Ukraine, in the Donetz and along the shores of Azov. The Russians are sweeping the invader back and back. We know beyond doubt that the vast blows struck by the democracies have greatly contributed to those glorious feats of arms. But until Stalin himself knows it beyond question also, there is to-day, and above all on the morrow of victory, the risk of that famous taunt leaping to Stalin's lips: "Hang yourself, brave Crillon: we fought at Arques and you were not there." Never, never was mutual understanding between ourselves and Russia so vital as now. On the collaboration of the "Great Power of Europe," victorious Russia must hang or fall the whole resettlement of Europe on a basis of security and peace and brotherhood. If Russia gains the impression that she alone defeated Nazi-ism, the conference table of the Allies will be a one-man show.

Dangers of Ultra-Humility.—

If as a nation and as individuals we see this war through to a victorious end, with no falling-off in our national and individual conduct, I judge that we shall have deserved the respect of the nations and earned for ourselves individually that degree of freedom in thought and action for which we have fought, and which is possible under modern conditions. In a word, we shall have won back and sustained our reputation as a nation of the first class, and as a people of character and initiative worthy of freedom and true democracy. If that be not an exaggerated claim, it is a reasonable basis on which to hang certain doubts and anxieties which assail me when I consider our present practices, international and domestic. A nation, like an individual, best serves its neighbour by "being itself." The less that a nation or a man puts on a cloak or twists its natural face for reasons of diplomacy in its converse with its neighbours, the sounder in the end will be its relations and the surer its mutual understanding with those neighbours. I am all for the re-establishment of the Christian ideals in the new world to be. I accept it that humility, selflessness and the practical ideals of an ideal "Communism" are planks in the Christian platform. Yet, even to-day, in the hour of continuing danger, I see danger in some of the expedients which we deem to be necessary in our relations with our Allies, and in many of the surrenders of individual freedom which our Government deems it necessary for us to make, as an expedient for victory. I do not underrate the great importance of our relations with our Allies reaching the highest pitch of sweetness, and that cannot be attained without constant surrender of self. But surrender of self should not imply surrender of panache. In our relations with America and Russia, we shall gain in the long run, rather than lose, by cutting out the "Uriah Heep" stuff and by forging these vital links of relationship with a more robust dignity and a more assured faith in our national virtues and claims to respect. It is another instance of our national fanaticism that we are not content with fifty-fifty in this matter of standing aside. In the sweet uses of civility our way is too much over-humility. We are too much prone to denigrate ourselves. In the history of the nations, our success (such as it has been) has been won by a robust faith in our virtues and character (such as they have been) as a nation, and in our domestic history our great days were achieved when individual freedom and initiative were at their highest. Or so it seems to me. It is not too early now (soon it may be too late) to check these wartime tendencies, and to win back a greater measure of dignity and pride in our relations with our Allies; and in our domestic sphere to arrest the landslide towards regimentation and bureaucracy and civic enslavement which has already passed the bounds of necessity and common sense. Let us be humble and unselfish without indignity. Let us serve the State without needless loss of our freedom and our initiative. We are dangerously near losing all of these vital assets for a generation to come.

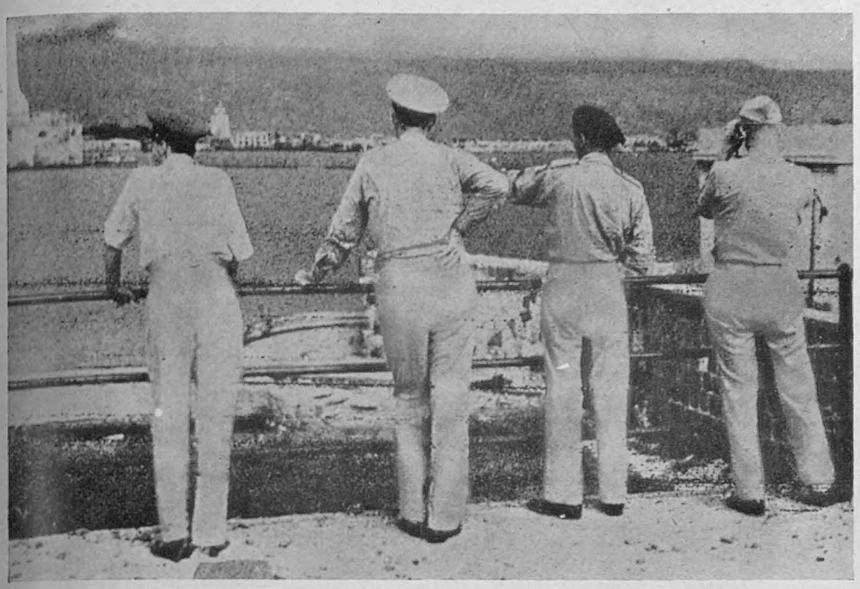
Harvest Gleanings.—

Under the best conditions, a corn harvest is a wasteful business. If thunder, hail, lightning and rain intervene when the grain is heavy and nearly ripe, it is a very wasteful business. In every field, too, the margin-making tractor crushes down a notable percentage of the yield of every field, with the result that before the corn is cut, the uses of the human marauder or gleaner are apparent. For it is better that a poultry keeper should gather up the spoil than the crows and pigeons. I do not believe that even to-day, even in war, the legal aspect of gleaning is codified. Like so much of our Law, it is built on custom. I think the gleaner has no legal right at all. Even by local convention, whatever equity he may possess arises only *after* the stooks are carried and the field bared, and even then he is a trespasser on the farmer's land, unless personally granted way-leave. And I think he ought to get that way-leave as a matter of courtesy, and, of course, he must observe all the rules which bind visitors to farm lands. Yet gleaning is common sense in war-time, and the wisdom of letting men, and not pests, reap the spoils of harvest stands out. I observe that every agricultural labourer is by convention allowed to carry home as much grain as he can to last his fowls through the winter, and usually, if he can convey it, farm manure and other assets for his cabbage patch. On these evidences, I justify gleaning even before the corn is carried, subject to the due courtesies and conventions. Without grain, hens won't lay eggs to justify their keep, and no substitute will make them.

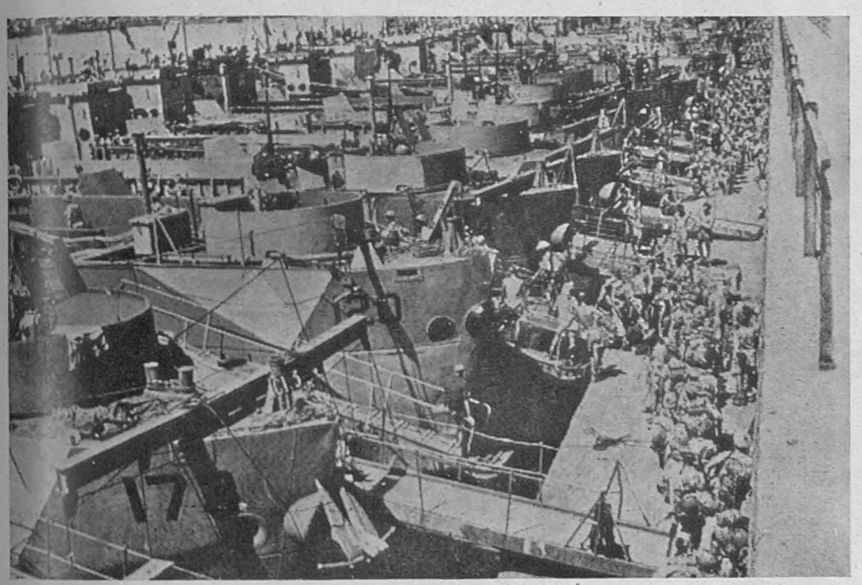
THE OLD STAGER.

The EIGHTH ARMY INVADES MAINLAND

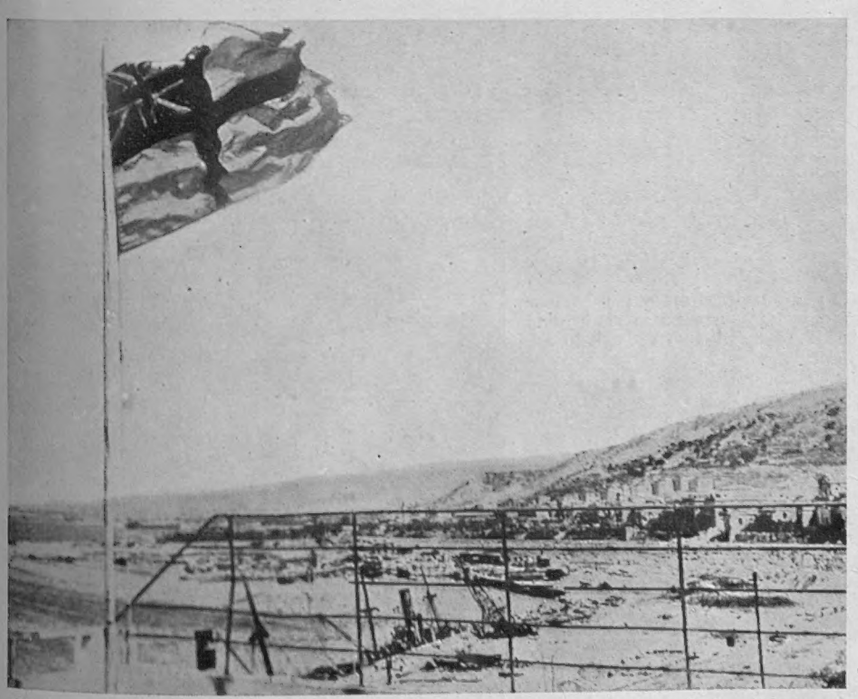
First Pictures Received by Radio from the "Toe" as the British and Canadian Forces Cross the Straits of Messina for the Invasion



ON THE EVE OF THE INVASION: Generals Montgomery and Eisenhower (on right), with their staff officers, study the mainland of Italy. The Straits of Messina at this point are only two or three miles wide



THE INVASION FLEET GATHERED IN THE HARBOUR OF CATANIA, with masses of British troops boarding the new-type landing craft as zero hour approached for the crossing to the "toe" of Italy in the early morning of September 3



THE BRITISH FLAG FLIES ON THE MAINLAND OF ITALY: The Royal Navy Ensign flying over the harbour of Reggio, on the Italian side of the Messina Straits. This was probably the first United Nations' emblem to be hoisted on the Italian mainland

THE TWO COMMANDERS: General Sir Bernard Montgomery (left), of the Eighth Army, and Major-General Guy Simonds, commanding the First Canadian Division, have a last-minute talk in Sicily before launching their joint attack

AMPHIBIOUS LANDING CRAFT LEAVING MESSINA AT DAWN, loaded with Allied troops for Italy. These are the now famous "Ducks," which can travel equally well by land or by sea

CASUALTIES COMING BACK TO MESSINA: a wounded Tommy being carried ashore from a returning invasion craft. Early casualties were extremely light, and were brought back at once

At 4.30 on the morning of September 3—the fourth anniversary of the outbreak of the war—troops of the Eighth Army and the First Canadian Division set foot on the mainland of Europe. They crossed the narrow Straits of Messina and made an assault-landing on the toe of Italy after the terrain had been "softened" by extensive air and artillery bombardment. The pictures published here were all received by radio from Algiers: they show the opening scenes in the conquest of Italy and how our troops were landed

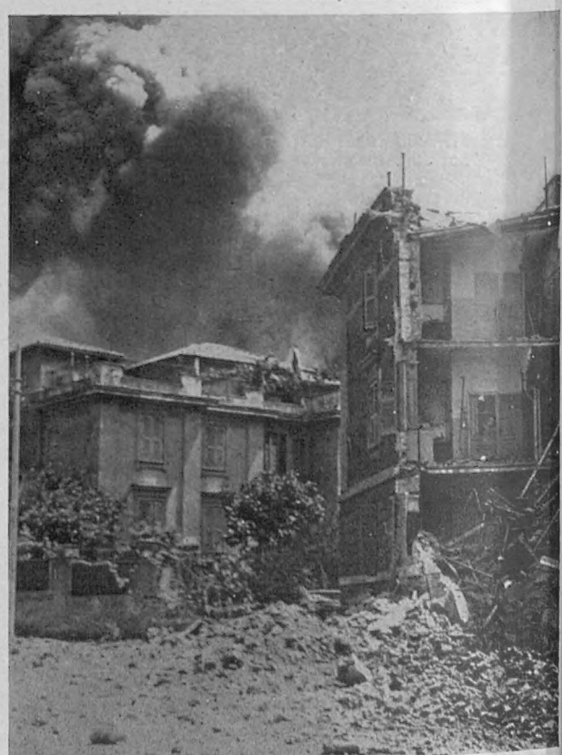
ITALY—The Bombing which Preceded the Invasion of the Mainland

New Pictures from Rome and the Industrial North, and from the Island of Sicily

ROMANS VIEW THE RUINS AFTER THE SECOND GREAT RAID ON THE CITY: This picture comes by way of Switzerland: it was taken after the attack on August 13, when the Italian capital experienced its second great raid by American bombers. In the foreground of the picture is a small-sized bomb-crater: in the background are a number of ruined buildings

AFTER THE ATTACK ON AUGUST 13 ON ROME: People are here seen removing their belongings from an apartment house which was hit in the daylight raid by American bombers. Tram-lines have been torn up and the lower stories of the big buildings behind damaged. There has, according to report, been a big exodus from the city as a result of the raid—a movement which may be accelerated now that Southern Italy has been invaded

THE POPE SPEAKS TO THE ROMANS AFTER THE AIR BOMBARDMENTS: His Holiness set out on a tour of the city as soon as the raiders had left. He was greeted by great crowds everywhere in Rome, who all cried for "Peace, Peace . . ." Here he is seen, with arms widespread, addressing one such crowd amid the ruins



AN APARTMENT HOUSE IN ROME wrecked by an American bomb in the August 13 daylight raid

HOW ROME GREETED THE FALL OF MUSSOLINI: Citizens and soldiers reading a special edition of "Il Messagero," which announced that Italy was once more "free"

"CALM AND DISCIPLINED" ROME: This is a propaganda picture: with it came this description—"Rome, contrary to the absurd statements propagated by enemy radio [ours!], conserves its calm and discipline, like all the rest of Italy's cities"

Now that our armies have set foot on the mainland of Italy and the campaign against that country is in full swing, we publish a series of pictures which have arrived in London within the past few days. All of them come from Italy, via neutral sources, and most of them go to show the demoralisation caused by the Allied bombing attacks which immediately preceded the invasion. According to most reports, civilian morale in Italy must be at a very low ebb. How it will survive the thought of armies marching onwards to Rome remains to be seen!

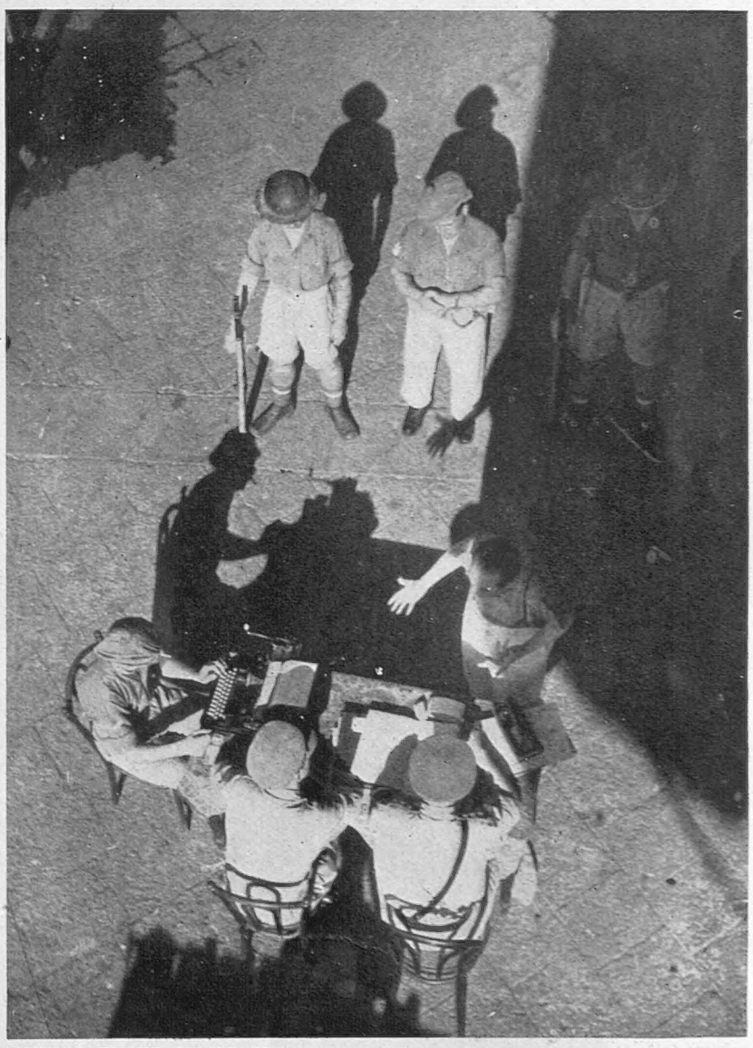
MILAN AFTER AN ALLIED AIR ATTACK : A radio picture just received in London showing a scene in the great industrial city after a heavy attack by Allied bombers (of which there have been a number during recent months). Trams have stopped running, and furniture hastily salvaged from bomb-damaged houses is piled in the streets, where the inhabitants have set up "open house." Thousands of others have fled into the countryside surrounding the great industrial centre

OUTSIDE THE BOMBED SCALA, famous Milan Opera House : In spite of the heavy blows on Milan, the name of Toscanini, the great Italian conductor now in the United States, has not lost its popularity. Posters bearing the words "Long live Toscanini" have been pasted up on the walls of the Scala Theatre the morning after an Allied bombing attack, expressing the true feelings of a large number of the inhabitants, for whom Toscanini stands as a symbol of friendship with the United Nations

THE FAMOUS GALLERIA VITTORIO EMANUELE, well known as a shopping centre in Milan, wrecked by bombs

THE PIAZZA FONTANA, with Milan Cathedral in the background, still undamaged despite the ruin elsewhere

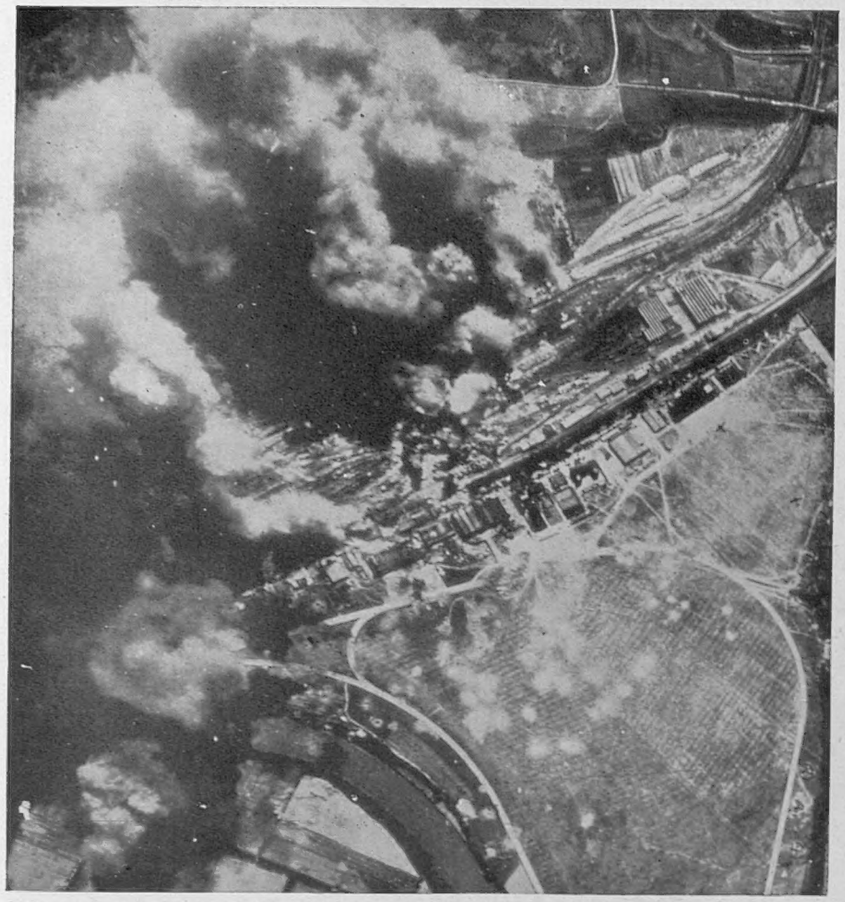
DEBRIS PILED HIGH IN THE STREETS OF TURIN, the great industrial city in the north of the country which has suffered as much damage from our bombers as any other place in the whole of Italy



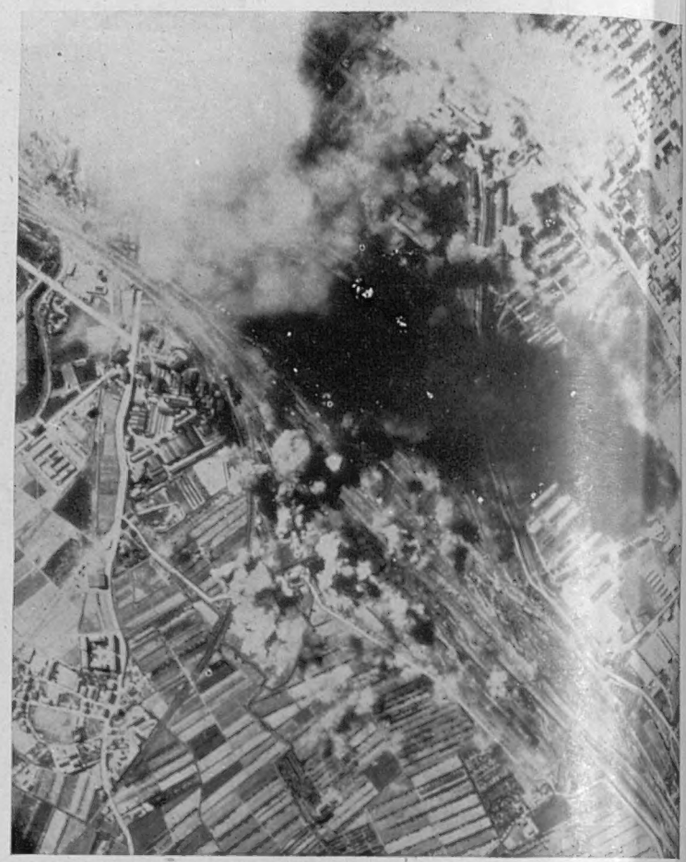
WHEN A FASCIST IS CORNERED : A scene from the Island of Sicily during the interrogation of the Vice-Prefect of Catania

An essential part of the Allied Forces' work in occupied Sicily is the dissolution of the Fascist party. Many of the leading members of the party who fled before the Allied advance have now been caught. Above, Desario Birancati, Vice-Prefect of Catania, is seen undergoing preliminary interrogation in the courtyard of the former Fascist H.Q. Birancati, one of the worst types of Fascist, joined the party in 1922 as a Squadrista, to further his own ambitions. He pushed his way into Catania's political circles, and with his spies and protégés, installed as clerks in all the provincial towns, was able to denounce various officials to the Prefect, in his official position as inspector. He was then sent to investigate his own denunciations—an admirable opportunity to make his own fortune

THE OFFENSIVE BY AIR : The Bombing Attacks on Rome, Wiener Neustadt, Regensburg and Rennes



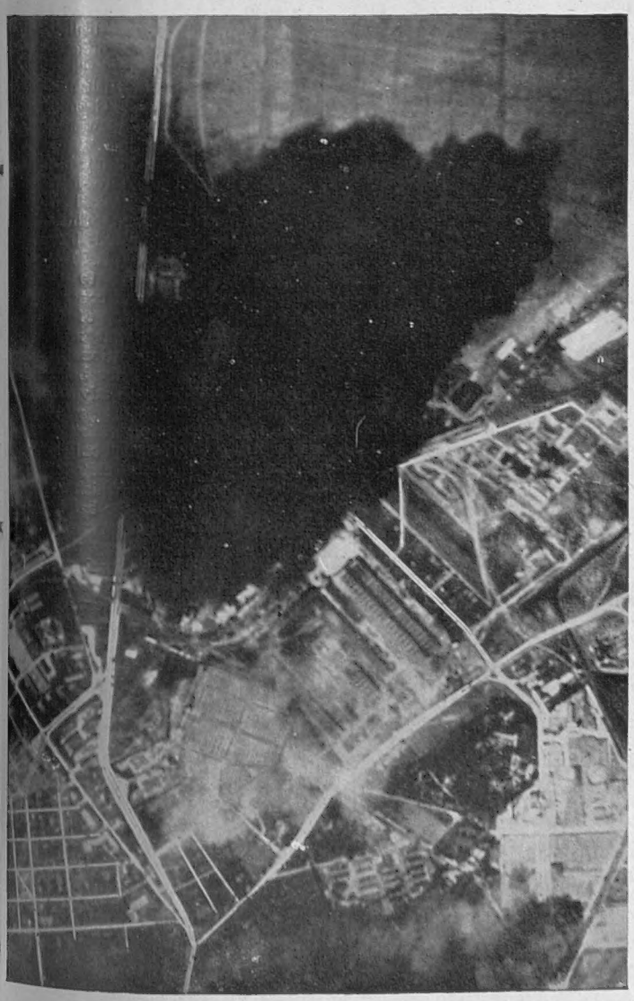
AMERICAN BOMBERS ATTACK ROME FOR THE SECOND TIME : On August 13, in daylight, aircraft operated by the U.S. Army returned to the Italian capital, to attack the big Littorio Marshalling Yards in that city. The Marauders put their bombs squarely on the target, as this reconnaissance picture, taken during the attack, shows. Clouds of smoke are rolling up from a train which was caught by the bombs and from burning buildings in the yard. The two points of smoke just above the bend of the River Tiber (lower left) are burning planes smashed on the airfield which adjoins the railway yards. Two planes, apparently damaged in the first raid, lie on the field (right centre). Several other planes are visible in the revetments around the field, but the Axis pilots made no effort to get them up to defend Rome. The white splotches are bomb-hits scored on the aerodrome during the first raid



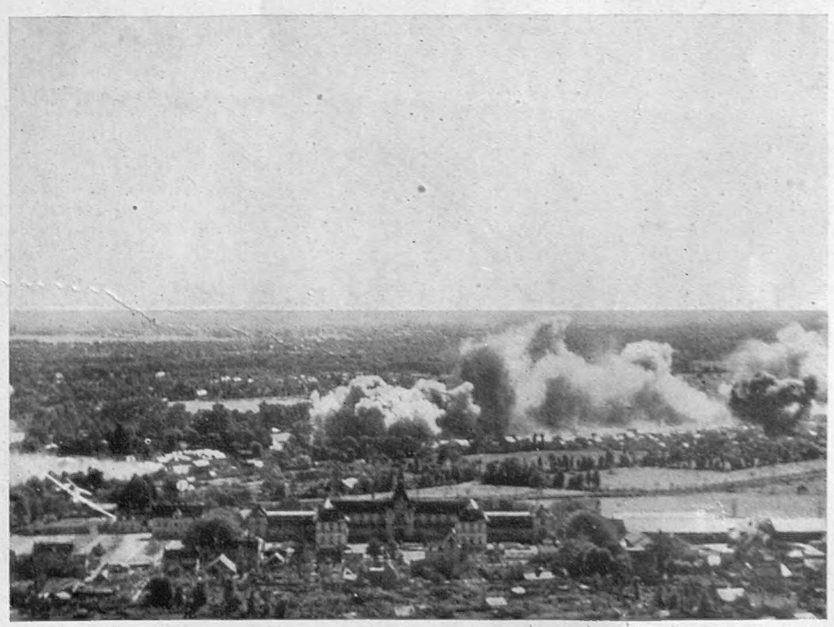
RAILWAY YARDS IN BOLOGNA, IN NORTHERN ITALY, being blasted by Flying Fortresses flown from North Africa : A direct hit was scored on an ammunition train during this raid ; the pall of white smoke over the yards is the result of this. Below the smoke pall, bomb-bursts may be seen blossoming in and about the multiple rail lines

THE BOMBING OF WIENER NEUSTADT, A GREAT INDUSTRIAL REGION ONLY 27 MILES SOUTH OF VIENNA : This newly created industrial region was established by the Germans in what they once assumed was a "safe" district. A large force of Liberator bombers of the Ninth U.S. Air Force, flying from North Africa, demonstrated that the area is no longer safe. They flew a round trip of nearly 2,500 miles to drop their load of 350 tons on the area—the first time that the German Reich has been bombed by aircraft based in Africa. The picture above shows (within the circle) one of the targets selected by the bombers : that on the right shows the precision with which the Liberators dropped their bombs. With the success of this, and other similar raids, the Germans have begun to realise that no single portion of their territory is free any longer from attack—no matter how far inland it may be

IN A BEND OF THE "BLUE DANUBE": FIRES BREAK OUT AT REGENSBURG, NEAR THE AUSTRIAN BORDER, as Flying Fortresses hit the Messerschmitt factory, where the latest types of German fighters are produced. The factory is situated exactly below the clouds of smoke in this picture



On August 17 a large formation of Flying Fortresses flew right out across Germany, almost to the Austrian border. Their objective was the new and "secret" Messerschmitt factory on the Danube River—a mammoth building where the latest fighter type, the Me.109G, is being built. The damage done was terrific—shops, huts, technical and other buildings were all hit and severely damaged. In consequence, the production of Messerschmitts has been very materially reduced. The flight to Regensburg was the longest yet undertaken by the Americans in daylight. Having reached their objectives, instead of returning to their bases in Britain, the bombers went right on to North Africa. Throughout the flight the Americans were under constant attack by the *Luftwaffe*: the losses sustained by the Flying Fortresses were as nothing compared to the enemy's—numerous fighters are known to have been destroyed on the ground at Regensburg, and 140 German fighters were shot down in the air.



BRITISH BOSTON BOMBERS ATTACK GERMAN NAVAL STORES AT RENNES, IN FRANCE: This picture was taken during a raid by R.A.F. Fighter Command on the Naval Stores Depot at Rennes, which serves the U-boat bases on the French Atlantic coast. The raid was made by daylight on August 8: during its course, considerable damage was caused among the dispersed buildings of the depot. Among the crews taking part were members of the Lorraine Fighting French Squadron. The picture above shows the clouds of smoke rising from the target area during the attack. One of the Bostons is just circling above the depot whilst another (bottom left) streaks away at roof-top height

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A HUNT CLASS DESTROYER, H.M.S. "TANATSIDE," IS ATTACKED AT SEA—BY "TORPEDOES" WHICH TURNED OUT TO BE PORPOISES!—An amusing naval occasion which took place recently in the Mediterranean. The porpoises came head-on at the destroyer, turned with her when her helm was put over—and then suddenly stopped, turned right about and disappeared!—*Drawing by Montague Dawson* (see *notes below*)

DESTROYERS and CORVETTES of the ROYAL NAVY

And their Fine Work throughout the Seven Seas

The Hunt class destroyer *Tanatside* has taken part in several exciting actions, but her crew think their most thrilling "escape" was in the Mediterranean recently, when the look-out reported "Two torpedoes approaching starboard, Sir."

Everybody was at action stations, and when he heard the warning, the Commanding Officer immediately swung round, but—to everyone's amazement, the "torpedoes" turned on to the same course and continued to come straight at the vessel! "We watched the 'torpedoes' getting nearer and nearer and were all getting ready for the shock," said one of *Tanatside's* officers, "when suddenly they both stopped, turned right about and disappeared. They were not torpedoes at all, but two porpoises which the look-out, in his keenness and excitement, had mistaken for torpedoes."

The *Tanatside* is one of a batch of fifty-two vessels of Hunt class design. The first of these was laid down in 1939. They are the smallest of modern British destroyers, being only 904 tons: many of them have already performed very fine service. This particular vessel has had several skirmishes with E-boats, and has intercepted and sunk a blockade runner, a tanker, while on convoy duty in the Atlantic. *Tanatside* has been adopted by Aberystwyth, but the Tanatside Hunt are also very interested in the ship and, in July 1942, the Hunt presented her with a silver tray which now adorns the wardroom.

Tanatside has another unusual distinction: she is probably the only ship which has been piped up the River Thames. A famous Scottish regiment were the *Tanatside's* guests while she was in harbour, and the soldiers spent several weeks in the ship "to get their sea legs." When she was instructed to dock for slight repairs, the soldiers stayed on deck and, all the way up the Thames, two pipers marched up and down playing to their hearts' content. The people on each side of the river cheered, and the *Tanatside* received a special welcome from the factory-girls as they neared London town. The *Tanatside's* crew say that it is one of the things they will never forget

A SCENE ON BOARD THE BRITISH CORVETTE "WIDGEON" ON ESCORT DUTY. A view from the bridge of the 4-in. gun crew in action: H.M.S. *Widgeon* is one of six corvettes of the Kingfisher class. She is a vessel of 510 tons and was designed for coastal convoy service: her length is 234 ft., her speed 20 knots, and she carries a complement of sixty. *Widgeon* is armed with one 4-in. anti-aircraft gun and eight smaller weapons; but her principal offensive armament is, of course, the depth-charge. The Kingfisher class cost about £100,000 apiece

THE GUNS OF H.M.S. "FOXHOUND," a British destroyer with a fine fighting record from Iceland to the Bay of Bengal. She has steamed 240,000 miles since the war began (*see notes below*)

H.M.S. *Foxhound* was laid down in August 1933 and completed in June 1935. She is a destroyer of 1,375 tons, with a complement of 145 and a speed of 36½ knots, and she is one of the hardest-worked destroyers in the Royal Navy. She has just steamed 240,000 miles since war began, and this she claims to be a record unequalled by any other ship of the Allied Navies.

For almost four years of war the *Foxhound* has steamed an average of 7,000 miles a month in seas from Iceland to the Bay of Bengal. In battle and in escort work, patrols and rescue missions, the *Foxhound* has put to sea in every kind of weather.

H.M.S. *Foxhound*, with the Home Fleet when war broke out, was in at one of the first U-boat "kills" when she and her sister-ship and *Firedrake* sank U-39 near the Orkneys. Later she escorted the world's largest ship, the *Queen Elizabeth*, on her wartime maiden voyage to New York, an interesting experience, as by the end of the second day the liner had worked up to such a speed that the destroyers could not keep up.

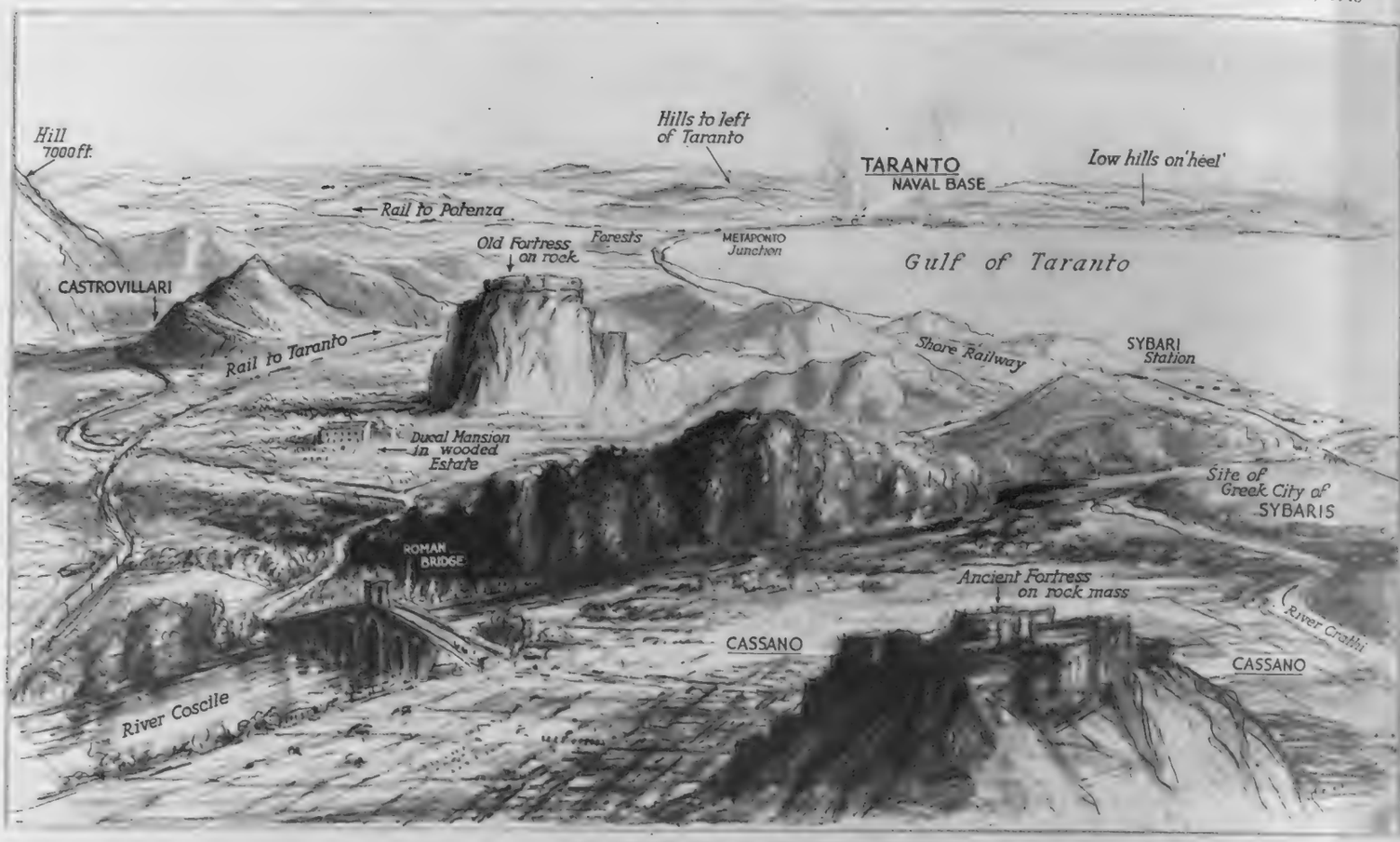
In the second Battle of Narvik Fiord, *Foxhound* steamed in with the battleship H.M.S. *Warspite*, and, in the fight that followed, blew up a German destroyer by gunfire. Next month she was among the escorts for the British force which occupied Iceland.

Steaming into the Mediterranean, the *Foxhound* then became part of the now famous "Force H," whose first job was to disable the French Fleet at Oran. She was with H.M.S. *Ark Royal* when Naval aircraft from the carrier bombed Cagliari in Sardinia.

In 1940, when she was refitting in London docks, the blitz was in full swing. The *Foxhound* was subjected to the continuous and heavy bombing which covered the whole of the dock area, and although over forty bombs fell either in the dock basin or on the jetty alongside during the ten weeks she was there, nothing touched the ship except an occasional incendiary, which was easily dealt with. The *Foxhound's* guns brought down one bomber. Malta convoys were amongst her next jobs, and early in 1941, with battleships and cruisers of the Mediterranean Fleet, she bombarded Genoa.

H.M.S. *Foxhound* has taken part in North African bombardments, has many times been through what was then the hazardous passage of the Straits of Pantellaria, and was in the assault on Madagascar. She has since circumnavigated Africa.

THE BRITISH DESTROYER "FOXHOUND," OF THE ECLIPSE CLASS, which claims to have set up a record by steaming 240,000 miles in four years of war. She has seen active service from Iceland to Bengal: her guns sank a German destroyer at Narvik, bombarded Genoa, brought down a Heinkel bomber during the London blitz, and fought off enemy planes during the passage of many Malta convoys



A LITTLE-KNOWN AREA OF THE "BOOT" OF ITALY, looking along the Gulf of Taranto towards the naval base. A view showing the nature of the country we may have to traverse—*Drawing by Percy Horne*

THE INVASION OF ITALY

The Nature of the Terrain we will have to Traverse in the Southern Part of the Country

A great number of places in the "Boot" of Italy have been receiving attention from the Allied air forces. There is a section between Cotrone and Taranto, both of which ports have been repeatedly bombed. The country is varied in aspect, ranging from rich forest land to stony, bare uplands. The huge plateaux and peaks of the La Sila are behind the spectator; in the middle distance are the rivers, forests and hills of the Basilicata province, of which Potenza is the capital. Both areas are still little known to the tourist and traveller, as the broken nature of the country has made the construction of roads and railways a difficult problem. The main tourist rail routes run along the shores both east and west. There is a linking line from Metaponto to Potenza and a branch line to Castrovillari, Cosenza and Cassano. It is the last-named, one of the most picturesque spots in the whole of Southern Italy, which appears in the foreground of the above view. The town lies on a narrow spit of land between the rivers Crathi and Cascile; these two mountain torrents add much to the sylvan beauties of this fortunate district. Its amenities were much appreciated by the Romans, who made use of its sulphur baths. Remains of a feudal castle crown the rock mass around which Cassano is built. The Dukes of Cassano had a great house here embosomed among masses of trees. The road to it is seen crossing a Roman bridge over the Cascile. Among the hills which surround this area is one which rises precipitously from its park-like surroundings. It is accessible only on its eastern side; some traces of an ancient fortress are shown on its summit. A short distance to the south of the modern railway junction of Sibari, on the line to Catanzaro, is the site of Sybaris, the luxury city of the Greeks, which has given us the word "sybarite," denoting a pleasure-loving person. Some relics of the long-deserted city are visible on the south bank of the Crathi river. The whole of this area was invaded and conquered by the Greeks

THE RETURN OF THE MULE. HOW THEY WERE EMPLOYED DURING THE SICILY CAMPAIGN—and may be employed again in Southern Italy. Sure-footed as the mule is, it frequently has to be assisted down steep hill-sides in the manner shown above—*Drawing by W. G. Whitaker*

The Royal Army Service Corps has been largely mechanised during recent years, but it still retains its Animal Transport Companies. These proved very valuable in Sicily and will no doubt prove of value again when we come to invade Southern Italy. During the struggle around Mount Etna, supplies for the troops could only be sent up by mule transport; and at other places the same humble animal was used to convey guns and ammunition to otherwise quite inaccessible spots. At one or two points, however, the going was so bad that even the sure-footed mule could go no further and men had to carry food, ammunition and weapons on their own backs! Mules can carry a load of 140 lb. up and down hills with gradients approaching one in three: but on the worst declivities the animals have to be assisted in the manner shown in the above drawing, with four men acting as "brakes" to each mule. Short ropes are used on the lesser gradients, and also the even simpler expedient of a man hanging on to the mule's tail and digging his heels into the ground at the trickiest spots!

MILAN, THE GREAT ITALIAN INDUSTRIAL CENTRE IN THE LOMBARDY PLAIN, heavily bombed by the R.A.F. and now a centre of anti-Fascist sentiment and activity. This view shows the four areas into which the city is divided—the Inner, or "Roman," centre; the Visconti area, confined by the Canal Ring; the Spanish area; and the big modern area where most of the large industries are concentrated—*Drawing by E. G. Lambert*

THE LAY-OUT OF THE CITY OF TURIN ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER PO. Not only is it the home of the huge Fiat works and other important industrial undertakings, but it is also a key point in Italy's rail connections with Switzerland via the Mont Cenis Tunnel—*Drawing by E. G. Lambert*

TWO STORM-CENTRES of NORTHERN ITALY—MILAN and TURIN

The great industrial capital of Milan lies at a commercially strategic point in the plain of the Po. The site is absolutely flat; no buildings stand out on rocky eminences. Only the church towers and the factory chimneys break the dead level of the roofs of the city. The city dates back to Roman times, when it rivalled in size Rome itself. This area lies in the very centre of the city. Encircling it is the zone of extension during the Visconti period, when the city was controlled as a duchy. This area is marked by the canal system which links Milan with the outer world. Still farther out from the city's centre, the Spanish bastions bear witness to another period of Milan's history. The modern factory area lies to the north-east.

Turin, another of the great centres of the Italian industrial north, like Milan, lies on a perfectly level site, with the difference that hills rise immediately from the right bank of the Po and provide a more diversified setting. The giants of the Alpine chain are, too, nearer to Turin. It is the capital city of Piedmont, the province lying, as its name denotes, at the foot of the mountains. Although the city possesses a number of ancient monuments, its lay-out is modern, the main streets cutting across one another in rectangular fashion.

THE RAIDING OF THE LOMBARDY PLAIN: A HALIFAX BOMBER, FLYING FROM ENGLAND, CROSSES THE ALPS TO BOMB MILAN before going straight on to North Africa. Tunis is seen blazing on the right, with Milan a little farther on (see notes below)—*Drawing by Roland Davies*

BRITAIN—NORTH AFRICA—BRITAIN: The routes followed during two recent raids. The map on the left shows the route followed by British aircraft during a recent attack on Milan and Turin, when they flew straight on to North Africa. That on the right shows how American bombers attacked Regensburg, also carrying straight on to Tunisia. The return flight was made by way of Western France

"SHUTTLING" from ENGLAND to NORTH AFRICA and BACK

The Path Followed by the Big Bombers in Some of Their Recent Raids on Germany and Italy

—*Special* Sphere *Drawings*

The flight to Italy from Britain is a very long one: equally, the flight to certain parts of Germany—as undertaken in daylight by American bombers—is an invitation to enemy fighters to carry out attacks along the return route. For both these reasons, during recent operations, the bombers have flown straight on to North Africa, instead of returning the same night to Britain.

The two maps reproduced on the left give an indication of what such colossal flights involve.

When Milan, the great industrial city in the Plain of Lombardy, was attacked on the night of August 12 there was bright moonlight, and such clouds as there were did not hide the targets. "It was very bright when we passed over the Alps," said a rear-gunner in describing the scene depicted above. "We could pick out the various peaks. We saw that Turin was being heavily bombed, and then, as we got to Milan, we saw smoke coming up from the fires to a height of 10,000 ft." Over the Alps on the way back rear-gunners looking towards Milan saw a huge pillar of smoke, rising straight up to a great height and then spreading out.

One of the bombers taking part—a Halifax—was reported missing after the attack. But it turned up eventually! It was after crossing the Alps that the oxygen supply ran out. Bombs were dropped on the target, but it was decided that the return over the Alps at great height was impossible. The captain decided to fly on to North Africa: the course he followed is that shown in the map on the left.

The second map given on the left shows the approximate course of the American bombers which attacked Regensburg on August 17. In order to avoid the German night-fighters probably lying in wait along the return route to Britain, the bombers flew straight on to North Africa after the attack. They returned by way of France—a flight which, in pre-war days, would certainly have "made the headlines" in most newspapers!

On right—**THE CHANGING METHOD OF GERMAN ATTACK ON BRITAIN.** The two drawings reproduced here illustrate how *Luftwaffe* tactics have changed during daylight operations over coast towns in this country. Previously, the bombers—mainly fighter-bombers—would come sneaking over in cloud, dropping out of the protective cover thus afforded, and making what came to be known as "tip-and-run" raids. Now, however, the bombers are keeping up very high: but this change-over in tactics has been countered by the excellent work of the "Heavies" of Anti-Aircraft Command. Observers along the coast have witnessed shell-bursts from our big 3·7-in. A.-A. guns making long, "chess-board patterns" in the sky. Even in the case of very high-flying aircraft, successes have been scored by the gunners: on some occasions the rate of fire from these guns has been so high that gun-crews have had to be changed over to give everyone in the detachment a rest!

AFTER A BOMBER ATTACK ON GERMANY: The crew of a Wellington which came down over the Channel are rescued by a Walrus aircraft and Air/Sea Rescue launch working in conjunction. This drawing shows the novel method by which the men were taken aboard the launch—*Drawing by Roland Davies*

The incident depicted in this drawing occurred during recent operations over the English Channel. There was a half-morning light when the Walrus pilot sighted the Wellington in the water. It had been down only a few minutes, but the crew of five were already out on the wing of the aircraft as it lay partly submerged in shallow water about half a mile off the Sussex coast. When the Walrus flew over, they were inflating a dinghy: they saw the rescue aircraft, waved and then settled down to await the arrival of a launch. When the latter arrived, the shallow water was quite wind-tossed, but by nosing up to the wing of the bomber the launch got two men off. The crew then had a bright idea about the others. They launched a dinghy and let it drift right past the bomber. At the right moment the three other men stepped into it and were then transferred to the launch

FLYING FORTRESSES OVER GERMANY—an unique picture. In this photograph, a German Messerschmitt 110 is actually seen going down in flames before the massed fire-power of the big American bombers. This incident occurred during the flight to the attack of the ball-bearing factory at Schweinfurt on August 17. After all claims had been checked, it was shown that 147 German fighters were shot down by the Fortress gunners in the course of a daylight air battle which ranged for hours. Furthermore, on August 17 other American bombers brought the total up to 307 German fighters destroyed in one and the same day!

On right—

MINES IN ENEMY WATERS laid by Polish airmen. The bag of the Polish squadrons co-operating with the R.A.F. now amounts to 570 German planes destroyed for certain. 5,700 Polish bombers have taken part in 575 raids and dropped nearly 14,000,000 lb. of bombs on the enemy. This picture illustrates one of the other contributions of the Polish Air Force: a giant bomber is being loaded up with a deadly cargo of mines for dropping in German waters

BRITAIN'S RICH CORN CROP IS HARVESTED BY MEN AND WOMEN WORKING SIDE BY SIDE IN T
a bigger acreage than ever is now producing food.

GETTING IN THE MAMMOTH 1943 CORN HARVEST

The immense increase in land under arable cultivation — estimated at 19,000,000 acres as compared with 12,000,000 in 1939—has meant a huge bread harvest which it has taxed the energies of the farmers to gather and the railways to move. Officials estimate that the load to be shifted this year is 4,500,000 tons of grain. During the middle of August the great fields of waving wheat presented a sight such as few have ever seen in this country. This applied chiefly to the Eastern and Southern Counties, where perfect harvesting conditions enabled the crops to be gathered in rapidly. Farther north, in the Midlands and Scotland, however, the conditions were not so good: wind and rain had beaten down certain areas and harvesting was expected to present difficulties not experienced in the South. Volunteer assistance, from young and old, proved invaluable to the farmers, and fields have been cleared in excellent time. In the wonderful results achieved by the farming community in this fourth year of war, the women of Britain have played a large part.

MISS CHRISTINE SMITH, OF BEDFORD, seventeen-year-old student of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, spent her summer vacation (with a number of other students) on a farm in Wiltshire in order to help during the harvest period

MISS ROSE ARDLEY, aged twenty-two, of Billericay, in Essex, is registered as a farm labourer. She is an expert tractor driver — amongst other things — and is quite capable of doing her own repairs in the field

THE FIELDS AT THE END OF THE FOURTH YEAR OF WAR. Waste land has everywhere been brought under the plough and, thanks largely to the women of Britain, this scene is typical of many parts of the country during the months of August and September—*Drawing by Edward Osmond*

MISS ALISON JELLICOE, a member of the famous naval family, took up farming at the outbreak of the war. Despite the grave doubts of local farmers, she took up 120 acres of neglected upland in Buckinghamshire: she was so successful in her first venture that she has now taken on another 230 acres. Miss Jellicoe operates her own tractor

On right—**A FAMILIAR SIGHT IN RURAL ENGLAND:** Mrs. Lumbis, of Walkden, Hertfordshire (who weighs 10 stone), handles with ease a big tractor (which weighs 11 tons) in the village street. Before the war she worked in a tobacco factory: now she declares that such big machines as she now operates are quite easy to handle!

ATTACK AT SEA—The Story of a British Convoy in the Bay of Biscay

Attacked by U-Boats and Aircraft, the Enemy was Beaten Off without Loss to any of Our Ships

We have often read descriptions of actions at sea between our convoys and their escorts, and the enemy aircraft and submarines which seek to destroy them. Here is a series of pictures secured by a photographer during one such battle in the Bay of Biscay and the Atlantic recently.

The convoy and its escort were attacked by a number of U-boats working in conjunction with the big four-engined Focke-Wulf Kuriers which the Nazis employ for such work on account of their long-range capabilities. After a fight which lasted for several hours, both bombers and submarines were driven off without loss to any of the ships in the convoy.

The Focke-Wulf Kuriers made high-level bombing attacks—first against the escorting cruiser, and then against the merchantmen under convoy. These attacks lasted for four hours, until darkness: they were driven off by the accurate gunfire of the escort vessels, the bombs in most cases dropping a good distance from the convoy. From daybreak on the following morning, the convoy was shadowed by reconnaissance aircraft: the expected major attack followed later in the day. The Kuriers came in to the attack in pairs; bombs were dropped inside the convoy, but no damage was sustained by any vessel, the enemy aircraft being continuously harried by the excellent gunnery of the escorting cruiser.

Whilst the Kuriers were engaged in this manner, a British Liberator aircraft on patrol came on the scene: she destroyed one of the enemy bombers whilst the latter was attacking the merchantmen, and then reported the destruction of another whilst returning to her base.

Just as the enemy's air attacks were finishing, some of the destroyers amongst the escort began to drop depth-charges on U-boats reported to be in the vicinity. This continued for some time, the destroyers dropping several patterns of depth-charges. Following one of these patterns, the escorting cruiser suddenly put on speed and finished off the attack with two of her own depth-charges. Whilst the action was in progress, the large convoy had been steaming steadily ahead. At one period, whilst the bombing was at its worst, a near-miss to the cruiser on the starboard side covered the photographer on board with water. The ship shook from stem to stern, with most of the crew on that side of the vessel dropping flat on the deck. Two of the photographer's cameras were put out

SPOTTING THE MOVEMENTS OF THE ENEMY AIRCRAFT as they come into the attack. Their every turn and twist was carefully noted throughout the whole action

ON BOARD THE ESCORTING CRUISER: Multiple pom-poms and Oerlikon anti-aircraft guns in constant action during the height of the attack against the attacking enemy planes

THE ANTI-AIRCRAFT BARRAGE put up by the cruiser, by means of which the attacking Focke-Wulf Kuriers were kept up high in the sky

THE END OF A U-BOAT. The escorting cruiser dashes in and finishes off the attack with depth-charges. The latter are usually dropped from the vessel's stern

TELLING THE MEN DOWN BELOW. The ship's torpedo officer (wearing bomb-flash protective gear) gives a running commentary of the enemy's movements to the ship's company below decks—a feature of modern naval warfare!

THE SCENE ON THE BRIDGE OF A CONVOY CRUISER DURING ACTION. This picture was taken at the moment when a British Liberator aircraft came on the scene and attacked a Focke-Wulf at sea-level. Two of the enemy were destroyed by the British plane

THE COMPANY ON THE BRIDGE keep a sharp look-out on enemy aircraft during the attack. All are wearing anti-flash protective coverings over head and shoulders

HANDING UP CUPS OF TEA TO THE LOOK-OUTS during a lull in the bombing. These men never leave their posts during action

THE GUNNERY OFFICER (*on right*) telephones his orders to the gun turrets during the action

STANDING BY THE TORPEDO-TUBES ON THE CRUISER'S DECK. These are fitted in sets of three, one set on each side of the ship. (Some other types of cruiser, however, have their tubes set in fours.) Usually, the torpedoes are 21-in. weapons: they have frequently done very heavy damage, as during the action against the German battleship "Bismarck"

action during this brief, but hectic, moment. At one time the Bay of Biscay was a favourite hunting-ground for both U-boats and enemy aircraft. During recent months, however, the R.A.F. have been operating in these waters with such success that the Bay is no longer a happy hunting-ground. To-day, our shipping bound for the Mediterranean enjoys a freedom from heavy and sustained attack which must be very pleasurable for the merchant captains who, previously, had to run the gauntlet on their journeys to Malta and the Middle East

THE AFTERMATH OF WAR

German and Italian Guns and Aircraft Destroyed in the Sicilian Campaign

A GERMAN 88-MM. GUN AT THE ENTRANCE TO REGALBUTO. This has a round of ammunition inserted the wrong way in the muzzle: the enemy obviously intended to blow it up, but did not have the time (See notes at right)

On left—The outstanding feature of this 88-mm. German gun is its comparatively diminutive barrel. This is due to the illusion created by the insertion in the muzzle, wrong way round, of a shell. Nevertheless, most modern German guns have very tapering barrels, due to the fact that they are constructed of a number of steel tubes shrunk on to one another, as against the former method of superimposing two tubes on top of each other with a wire-wound layer in between. There is less tendency for these new barrels to "whip" and so spoil the aim as the shell is discharged. They have greater muzzle velocity and staying power. As such, they are peculiarly suitable for anti-aircraft and anti-tank purposes, and the German 88 in the picture is used for both. The model may be compared with our own 3·7-in. anti-aircraft gun, of similar calibre, over which it has the advantages of superior mobility on its four-wheeled chassis, and greater adaptability to all kinds of field conditions. These were the guns which wrought such havoc among our tanks at Sidi Rezegh

AN ITALIAN COASTAL GUN whose crew surrendered in Sicily without firing a shot. This picture tells a significant story. It shows one of the big coastal-defence guns in the south-eastern part of the island, the Italian crew of which evidently had no heart for the fight. They did not even bother to remove or destroy the vital breech-block, which our men are examining. It is seldom indeed that guns are ever captured with breech-block intact, especially heavy guns of which the block is detachable. The weapon shown is a 6-in. gun of last-war pattern, the iron-shod wheels, smooth barrel and absence of modern recuperator fixing its age. In some ways, the Italians cannot be blamed for leaving the piece unfired, as the recoil of this ancient type is notoriously devastating!

ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF MESSINA: A massive, wheel-mounted German gun which was knocked out by American artillery fire. One of the gun crew lies dead beneath its wheels

IN A TANK GRAVEYARD IN TUNISIA: This picture comes from Mateur, where in a field outside the town repose the ruins of an Axis armoured force wiped out in the desperate fighting in this area. At the right lie the fragments of one of the big Mark VI Tiger tanks; at the back is a German Mark IV fighting vehicle

A SCENE IN NORTH AFRICA, where a number of German field pieces await reconditioning. In the foreground are 105-mm. guns and medium-calibre artillery: at the back are light guns and anti-tank material. Much of this captured booty is being turned over to French and other Allied troops

AN ITALIAN ANTI-AIRCRAFT TRAIN "SCUTTLED" NEAR SYRACUSE, IN SICILY. Members of a British Royal Artillery detachment stationed at Targia are here surveying the damage done by the Italians to one of their mobile coastal anti-aircraft trains. It was equipped with four heavy guns and listening apparatus: it should have resisted the Allied landings on the south-eastern shores of the island, but it had little chance to put up a show. Guns and bogies were wrecked by the Italians shortly before the valuable port of Syracuse fell into our hands and became a base for further operations on the island

A PICTURE FROM CATANIA: A German Heinkel He. 111 bomber with its back broken by the explosion of a bomb on the airfield during the heavy R.A.F. attacks which preceded the capture of the port towards the end of the Sicilian campaign

ANOTHER VIEW OF THE AIRFIELD AT CATANIA, where the Allied air forces made a thorough job of destruction. In this picture are a number of shattered enemy planes and a ruined hangar. Fighters and bombers of the Royal Canadian Air Force played a big part in bombing operations during the Sicilian campaign

A WRECKED GOTHA GO. 242 GLIDER ON A SICILIAN AERODROME. This massive aircraft has no motors, its purpose being to transport German troops in tow behind a powered aircraft. It is of considerable size and obviously capable of carrying a large number of infantry: the wing span is enormous. The Germans used large numbers of such gliders during the campaigns in Tunisia and Sicily for reinforcement of their land troops: many of them were shot down by the R.A.F. Note the twin tail booms in this picture

PHOTOGRAPHIC RECONNAISSANCE

How it is Carried Out by the Special Units of the R.A.F.

In last week's issue we published a series of pictures in illustration of the work of the Photographic Reconnaissance Units of the U.S. Air Forces in this country. Readers will recall that this work is mainly being carried out by the Americans for the purpose of map-making. Here is a further series of pictures—this time of the R.A.F.—showing how the admirable reconnaissance pictures, published in THE SPHERE and other journals from time to time after a big raid, are secured.

The task of the pilots is a risky one. Before an attack they have to go out and photograph the prospective target; from the information contained in their pictures the details of the raid are planned. Then, shortly after the heavy bombers have returned, the Photographic Reconnaissance airmen have to go out once again to secure evidence of the results of the attack.

The aircraft principally used are special Spitfire XI's or Mosquito IX's, according to the objective. For their safety they rely on great height, high speed and special routing: they fly alone and use oxygen practically throughout the entire trip. Navigation is by dead reckoning; and, of course, meteorological conditions are a very important factor if the results are to prove worth while.

Earlier in the war, icing-up of the cameras was a serious difficulty: the cameras in use were designed for service at 15,000 ft., but from a height of 30,000 ft. the pictures secured were very small indeed, and covered an area of 40 square miles of country! To-day the aircraft are equipped with twin-cameras of 14-, 20- and 36-in. focal length, which cover only a few miles of territory, despite the heights at which they operate. The cameras are worked by remote control from the cockpit, and they can take any number of pictures up to five hundred.

As soon as a pilot has returned from a reconnaissance, he reports to an Intelligence Officer, and his pictures are taken away and developed. Within an hour or two of his landing the prints are ready, and a full report on the whole series of films is available within two days

HIGH ABOVE THE CLOUDS, A MOSQUITO IX IS ON ITS WAY to photograph enemy territory. The pilot will continue at a great height, using oxygen all the time, until his mission has been safely completed

A SPITFIRE XI EN ROUTE FOR GERMANY. This type, and the Mosquito IX, bring back photographs of Bomber Command targets before an attack: they then go out and take pictures of the results after the raid

INSTALLING THE GIANT CAMERAS INTO ONE OF THE MOSQUITOES. These can work at a very great height: they are operated electrically by the pilot by remote control from the cockpit and they no longer "freeze up" at height

HAVING PIN-POINTED THE TARGET by means of a bomb-sight, the navigator operates the camera over the target area. His pictures will show all the salient points on the ground beneath

PILOTS OF THE PHOTOGRAPHIC RECONNAISSANCE UNIT being briefed by the Intelligence Officer before setting out on a flight. The big map behind indicates the area under survey

THE WHOLE OF THE CITY AND HARBOUR OF HAMBURG has been mapped out by reconnaissance pilots, and this is the result. Bomber Command thus know exactly what has been achieved by their "obliteration" raids

GIVING THE NECESSARY INFORMATION TO GO WITH THE PICTURES: A Spitfire pilot, just returned, discusses the map with an Intelligence Officer after a trip over Germany. His report is his first duty after landing back at his base

A W.A.A.F. OFFICER WITH TWO PILOTS inspecting a film just developed. By matching the photographs taken in sequence by the big cameras stereoscopic pictures can be obtained

THE DENSITY OF THE DEVELOPED FILM IS TESTED before it is printed. This, and many other tasks of a similar nature are now performed by members of the W.A.A.F. at the station

THE DEVELOPED FILM IS NOW ON THE DRYING DRUM, and it is the duty of the W.A.A.F. operators to make sure that no dust or marks get on to the film. Many copies of each film will be taken off later

The COMING of the WOOD AGE

A Revolution in Wartime Industry and Post-war Planning Brought About by the New Scientific Processes in Connection with the "Densification" of Wood. Described by CHARLES GRAVES

IT is the greatest pity that Rudyard Kipling is not alive to portray the feelings of H.M.S. *Unicorn II.*, our oldest frigate of the line. She was in action in 1790, and is still afloat, flying the White Ensign, in a Scottish port. She is older than H.M.S. *Victory*, and has lived to see the complete turn of the wheel. For so revolutionary are the new processes of die-moulding and densifying wood, that not only are Mosquitoes and assault barges made from wood: even frigates are being made of it.

Wood has gone to war with a vengeance. But the situation is different from 1914-18. Our supplies of Scandinavian timber have been completely cut off; so home-grown timber has had to supply the greater number of pit-props for the mines. Without pit-props we could get no coal, and therefore no steel, guns, ships, aircraft nor tanks. Every rifle and tommy-gun has a timber butt. Rifle butts used to be walnut. Now they are made of mahogany and beech. Wooden ammunition-boxes are made by the million. So are food-boxes. In the lines of communication, railway sleepers and telegraph-poles are essential. In Libya, actual rails were made of compressed wood.

Wood is required for every form of transport—lorries, ambulances and wireless vehicles, for example. To-day, air-sea rescue launches are made of wood, which figures heavily, too, in the construction of motor torpedo-boats and motor gunboats.

Some British newspapers jeered at the Macchi, the Italian aircraft which the R.A.F. met in the Middle East. Yet British pilots said that it could turn on a sixpence, and were most impressed by its performance. Recently, it was announced that the Mosquitoes, which have been so invaluable in maintaining the nerve war against Germany, are made of wood. This, it is true, is a special kind of wood. The balsa-tree grows in Brazil, Trinidad, Equador, British Honduras and Nicaragua. In the last war, it was used to a small degree for waterproofed submarine-nets, the linings of pith helmets, and as a substitute for cork lifebelts. To-day it is used for several secret weapons.

Balsa wood varies in weight from 7 lb. per cubic foot to 14 lb. per cubic foot. In fact, it is lighter than cork itself. And though it has low tensile properties, it provides rigidity at a much lower weight than metal. For the layman to appreciate the lightness of balsa wood, it may be said that ordinary deal weighs 32 lb. per cubic foot compared with the aforesaid 7 lb. of the best balsa.

In addition to Mosquitoes, Ansons, Oxfords, Manchesters and other training aircraft are all made of wood. More important, however, is the return to the use of wood for the propellers of Spitfires; while it is rumoured that an all-wood bomber is being made in the United States with a speed of over 700 miles an hour.

The truth is that the whole aircraft industry is being revolutionised in favour of the substitution of wood for steel. Densification itself has been known for some time, and consists of squeezing under enormous pressure thin sheets of timber (say Quebec birch) with layers of teco (paper impregnated with resin). Seventy-five of these sheets, otherwise known as veneers, which would stand 10 in. from the ground in their normal state, are pressed to the thickness of less than an inch, so that the special resins impregnate all the sheets of wood.

The result is a material both lighter and tougher than steel. As a matter of fact, all timber is stronger than steel, whether under compression or tension, judged merely in terms of strength for weight. But densification and these new die-mouldings, the invention of Bruno Jabonksy, a "Stateless" Pole born in Germany, are already ushering in a new age—the Age of Wood. Research work during the war will put wood, both as a constructional and a moulding material, far ahead of anything done previously with timber. At the moment, densified wood is being used for many secret purposes which cannot be mentioned because of security. It is safe to say, however, that many jigs and tools are being made out of *wood in preference to metal*, and that post-war motor-car bodies will be made of the same material, being lighter, warmer and cheaper. Railway coaches will also be made of this material, which is non-inflammable. Built-up beams, large spans and bridge-building are only some of the many other purposes for which timber will be used in the engineering trade. With the use of resins, wood can be made highly fire-resistant, waterproof and immune from attacks of bacteria, fungi and insects. No material is 100 per cent. fireproof, not even asbestos. And ordinary baulks of timber, providing they are large enough, are as fire-resistant as any other material. Before the war there was a fire in Surrey Docks. After five days' blaze, the 12-in. by 12-in. oak beams were charred to a depth of 1½ in., but the walls stood up. A similar fire at a warehouse in Wapping caused a total loss to the steel-and-concrete building, for the steel girders buckled and pulled the inner walls down.

To-day, Great Britain is short of 4,000,000 houses. The Ministry of Works hopes to replace them all with its ten-year plan, in spite of the fact that it took the whole twenty-one years between 1918 and 1939 to build that number of houses. The building trade itself anticipates the employment, after intensive training, of 1,250,000 men for five years after the war. Two-thirds of this labour will be spent on the reconstruction of existing houses and the building of new ones. The remainder will be diverted to a similar job on schools, churches, public-houses and other buildings, together with the reconditioning and bringing up-to-date and changing over of factories from the production of the implements of war to export commodities. As it takes nine months and £1,000 to build a brick cottage, it is perfectly apparent that the building industry cannot accomplish the Ministry of Works' programme with the personnel available in the time suggested. This means that other trades must come to the help of the building industry, which automatically raises the much-maligned question of pre-fabrication.

There is no doubt that the political significance of the post-war housing plans is immense. Nobody has been so unwise as to revive the old phrase about "a land fit for heroes to live in." The fact remains that this last-war pledge will have to be redeemed after this war, and it seems that the only way this can be done is by pre-fabrication. This can take two forms—either the erection of de-mountable houses to fill the gap until solid brick structures have been erected, or permanent structures for satellite towns. The advantage of pre-fabrication is that all parts of the house can be made under cover in a factory, so that "wet" time does not exist.

Speed of erection of the new houses is vital, and American statistics show that it takes only between 320 and 360 man-hours to erect a pre-fabricated, three-bedroomed house of good solid timber, compared with 1,100 to 2,000 man-hours for a house of similar size built on traditional lines. In this country, the speed of erection would depend on the size of the order. A good firm with an order to build 1,000 houses could erect them at the rate of forty a week. In this connection, it must be remembered that it is not the method of construction which matters. Durability is purely a question of the quality of the timber and other materials. Nor does pre-fabrication mean that pre-fabricated houses are to to a mere row of boxes. On a grid and unit system, pre-fabrication can be applied to any architect's design or plan without any trouble at all. In other words, it is easy to have variety.

No doubt steel houses will be built, and so will concrete houses. But timber is quite the most adaptable material, both for handling and speedy erection. True, we may be short of wood at the moment, but Sweden, I am sure, will gladly give us 1,000,000 standards (a standard is 165 cub. ft. of wood) immediately after the war if we send the equivalent value of coal. And when people talk about a timber famine, they close their eyes to the fact that Russia and Siberia alone have 2,332,000,000 acres of productive forest. As the population of the world is estimated at 2,126,000,000 people, including those who live in mud huts, the lowest yield of those forests would provide four standards per capital of the world.

Another fact usually forgotten is that timber, properly used and treated, lasts much longer than it takes to grow. Look at the oak beams in Westminster Abbey, and bear in mind that the rotation of soft-wood forest averages seventy-five years.

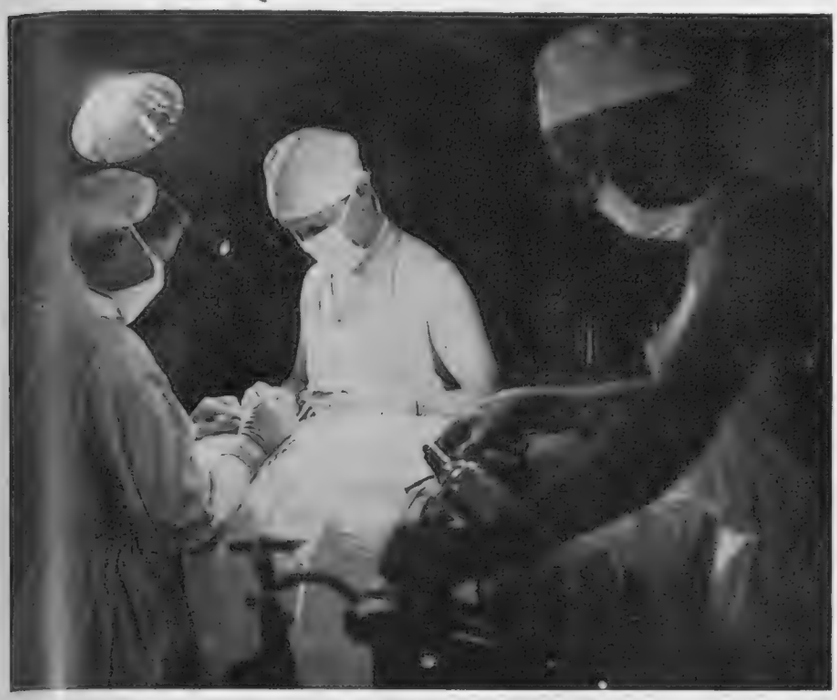
Much is being done in this country by the Forestry Commission. The Forestry fifty-year plan involves the planting of 5,000,000 acres. This, however, is too small, and encouragement should be given to all landowners and farmers to plant shelter belts and small woodlands. At present it is the large landowners and the Government scheme which are primarily affected. The farm forester should also be encouraged.

WHEN BRITAIN'S WALLS WERE BUILT OF WOOD: This picture was taken in January 1939: it shows H.M.S. *Conway*, one of the last of the wooden ships of the Royal Navy. She was then lying in dock at Birkenhead for examination: her faulty timbers were to be renewed and her bottom resheathed with copper to give her another fifty years of life. Originally a 26-gun frigate, *Conway* had, up till then, been in the River Mersey for seventy-nine years as a training ship

MAKING USE OF BRITAIN'S OWN SUPPLIES OF TIMBER IN THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS: Vast quantities of timber are needed in wartime. Since the very first months of the present conflict, men of the Canadian Forestry Corps have been working in the Scottish forests: these skilled and hardy men, who come from all parts of the Dominion and who are trained soldiers as well as foresters, have established saw-mills in the beautiful Highlands and are now cutting up the trees into logs and planks for war purposes. By this means vital shipping space has been saved. This picture was taken on the shores of Loch Ness: it shows a tractor, with a "Sulky" in tow, bringing freshly felled trees from the forest to the mill

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this publication should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export

WARTIME ACTIVITIES AT HOME AND ABROAD



THE ARRIVAL OF THE HOSPITAL SHIPS AT MALTA. During the all-night voyage from Sicily, twenty-one operations were carried out. Owing to the intense heat, the surgeons worked stripped to the waist. The hospital carrier *St. David* had the distinction of being the first hospital ship to arrive in Sicily: during her subsequent overnight passage from there to Malta with the first wounded aboard, twenty-one operations were carried out in the ship's operating-theatre. The boat was full: of the 316 casualties aboard, 258 were stretcher cases

STAFF-SERGEANT B. G. TOCHER, of Aberdeen, at work in the dispensary aboard the "St. David" on her voyage to Malta

WHAT SOMETIMES HAPPENS WHEN A FIGHTER MAKES A CRASH-LANDING. This Thunderbolt hit a wind-sock on the aerodrome as it was taking off: the pilot managed to make a crash landing, albeit the motor was left some forty yards behind the fuselage. The Thunderbolt burst into flames as soon as it struck the ground, but the foamy substance extinguished the fire very rapidly. The pilot walked away from the wreck, suffering only from singed eyebrows. Prompt action on the part of the station's crash crew saved him from more serious injuries

AMAZONS OF THE HOME GUARD. The First Battalion, Women's Home Defence, nominated as Home Guard Auxiliaries, has now been accepted for duty, and the women are helping to fill the many gaps caused by the call-up of men. Here members of the 1st Battalion, in battle kit, are being inspected by their Commandant, Miss Sidney Malcolm, organiser of the unit. Before the war she was a singer, her home being at South Woodford

A VISITOR FROM THE SKY. An unusual visitor came aboard a British cruiser on patrol duty in the mid-Atlantic recently. It was an exhausted carrier-pigeon, identified as belonging to a North of England Pigeon Club. How far it had flown, or how it came to be in the proximity of the cruiser, is a complete mystery. It soon revived under the care of members of the crew, and it was later put ashore at Gibraltar to be sent back to England

ANOTHER WAR JOB SUCCESSFULLY ACCOMPLISHED. Mrs. Scott was asked to do a wartime job for Britain: she decided to help build ships. She is the mother of three children and wife of a soldier. Now she has been honoured by being allowed to launch the ship she helped to build. A nurse brought her fourteen-month-old daughter Pat; Philip, aged four, and Marina, aged eight, were brought from school. This picture was taken as "Mrs. Scott's ship" went down the slipway

AWAY FROM THESE WARS . . . .

Memories and Thoughts of the Years Between

—A Fortnightly Causerie **By J. G.**

HOLIDAY-HOUSE—During a brief holiday, I saw again the outsides of some of the historic country-houses of England and Scotland whose hospitality I have known, and I thought much of their future and their fate. And as the train moved fast or slowly across the face of Britain, I thought also of those old manor-houses and lesser country houses which are chief gems in the setting of many lovely villages, now hidden in greenery, or only half revealed from the train windows. Large or small, these old houses, dating back to Tudor times, are the chief documents of our social history and of country life, and are rich treasure-houses of traditions of our race of which we have no need to be ashamed. What is to be their fate? On our political and economic horizon the cloud-banks lie deep. What's to come is still unsure. Most owners of the larger, and many of the smaller, are in no doubt that they will never again be able to maintain these houses as they were able to do before 1914, nor to carry on in the compromise which was still possible for many of them before 1939. It was an unsatisfactory compromise at the best. It was living on capital and very slender hope of better times, and it left the owner the poorer and his estate ever increasingly a wasting asset.

But up to 1939 the harsh laws of economic survival of the fittest governed the market and the ownership of these gems, which still carried pride of possession and still attracted purchasers. Old families, submerged in the economic blizzard, gave place to new owners, and some of the beauty, if not all the fine traditions, of the old houses was maintained.

The Bramshills and the Blicklings, with their deer parks and their lakes and their privileged graces and peace, changed hands and often took on a new lease of life from the wise and tasteful use of new money. For until 1939 there was always a moneyed class, rich and poor, "haves" and "have-nots."

All we can be sure of to-day is the bald fact that for years to come there will be no "haves" to the scale of maintaining a Stanway or a Binghams' Melcombe, let alone a Knole or a Hatfield.

For the great houses, the problem is acute, and the chief hopes of some sort of survival for them seem to lie in grandiose schemes allied to, or connected with, the functions of the National Trusts for England and Scotland, and those schemes long since put in practice in France. Their grandeur and traditions and historic importance favour big national schemes, educational and scientific; or, alternatively, the weight of their names may ensure an annual revenue derived from sightseers or tourists, especially if they lie reasonably close to big cities or are easy of access by road, rail or air transport.

The Lesser Country-house.—But for the remoter and lesser manor-houses the problem is individual, and perhaps more difficult, and the remedies less concrete. Yet in the heritage of England their value is not less. They are not only the memorials, but the nurseries, of English craftsmanship at its best. It was upon these lesser gems of our heritage that I let my imagination play, seeking a solution.

I made mention earlier of Stanway, a smaller manor-house in Gloucestershire, the home of Traceys and Charterises for many generations. Its social history is the history of scores of such houses in England and Scotland and Wales, and may well serve as a basis for weaving a new tapestry on the loom of time. In its first planning, it was designed to be very much what Crusoe made of his Juan Fernandez Island—a self-supporting unit. It had its brewery and its bakehouse, perhaps its mill. It had its barns and store-houses, its granary and carpentry and sawing shops; inside the house, its mistress and her daughters and womenfolk weaved hangings for beds and windows, and cloths for the menfolk; cured bacon, preserved fruits and vegetables, made wines and simples, brewed and baked, planned and stored, and saw to it that the estate provided a constant plenty of simple fare and good cheer for family, household, dependants and scores of casual visitors; while in its shops and outhouses village craftsmen built many of the tools required for agriculture and horticulture and house furnishing, using local materials, wood and even iron, home-woven wools, stone and reeds and straw. Stanway was, in short, in those days a small working model of its big neighbour Badminton, whose social economy is splendidly documented in printed selections from archives.

Until the coming of the industrial revolution, very little change took place in the medieval manner of life of these old manors. What Macaulay in his famous "Chapter Three" wrote of English country-house life at the accession of James II was, in essentials, still true in 1800. A certain accretion of culture and education, a rather wider outlook, had perhaps benefited the families of the owners, but the self-supporting labours of the households and dependants had undergone very little modification. And decades were still to come before mass production, universal providers, better communications and scientific methods of preserving cheap foods came to make a mock of isolation and self-sufficiency, and to kill the greatest boons which this country ever enjoyed: the village craftsman, the domestic arts and the self-contained rural unit.

The Germ of an Idea.—The ideal at which any lover of Britain must aim is to conserve the life and usefulness of these old manors in the hands of those who best love and most understand their fine traditions; but in all too many instances that ideal can only be attained if the properties can be made once more revenue-producers, or, at the least, self-supporting.

THE FIRST TWO FARM COTTAGES ARE NOW ALMOST COMPLETE. These are being built by the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture in Riding Lane, Hildenborough, Kent. They will be ready for occupation on September 10. Intended for farm labourers, they are being erected at a cost of £985 each by a Sevenoaks firm: the rent is to be 15s. 8d. per week. The delay in building the 3,000 cottages has been attributed by the Ministry of Agriculture to the man-power situation and to the hold-up of tenders

Recently, I was shown some beautiful seascapes painted long ago by an old Russian. He was very rich and owned several great estates under the old regime, and he was devoted to his art. It was his pleasure every year to open one of his great houses in summer and autumn and to invite there as many as forty young art students as his guests, and daily to instruct them in the art of which he was a master. The anecdote suggested to me one line of reasoning. I remember that Christopher Turnor put his huge "white elephant" near Grantham constantly to such experiments in the furthering of social and political and religious projects.

We in Britain have always been ready enough to pay high for our holidays. We may, with fair confidence, assume that in the years ahead not only will holidays gain in importance and length, but a much wider class will, earning bigger wages, have more money to spend on holidays and recreational, cultural and educational interludes; and may even revolt at last from the degradation and discomforts of holidays-in-queues at seaside fun fairs. These old manor-houses might well become the first holiday-houses in our land, and invaluable educators of taste and wise-thinking.

It is not beyond the wit of man to devise a scheme, or group of schemes, whereby the owners of such manors could continue in ownership and occupation by means derived from a new profession of educational and recreational direction. In summer and winter, they might fill their houses with students and holiday-makers from factory and office, set going again the ancient crafts and domestic chores of our rural forefathers, and keep these sane and wholesome country crafts continuously alive by the labours of a succession of townsmen, trained in their uses and revelling in the change of occupation. That these guests would soon learn to value the change of occupation and derive immense benefit from it and interest from it, may be accepted as certain. As certainly, they would pay reasonably high for the privilege. For myself, if I were owner of such an old manor and was faced with the necessity of leaving it to strangers or to decay, I would leap at such a prospect. Here would be a new and useful profession, in the very heart and meaning of our New Charter. I should become one of (what ought to be) the first profession in the land.

I can conceive of no plan so brilliant for providing for myself a decade of constant interest and pride than in rebuilding the ancient uses of my old house, reviving the old crafts, continually training on a succession of willing pupils to keep them going and making of a house of "dead yesterdays" a living home for hundreds, a home self-supporting, a school of broadening interests, of enlarging sympathies, to which young and old would come from teeming cities to drink in the ancient wisdom and peace of the country-side, learn something of the lore of nature and the simplicity, and take back to towns and workshops a breath of fresh air and the promise of more.

One can imagine how many of those paying-guest pupils would not fail to "reserve accommodation for next year" in those "walnut" or "jasmine" bedrooms! It is the germ of an idea—which I leave to cleverer men to work out in detail.

Its virtues as an idea put into practice are confirmed by the experience of nearly sixty years—for me.

For Life has taught me three cardinal rules *ad bene vivendum*—if to live well is indeed comprised in giving and receiving the maximum happiness in life.

(1) "To labour *with your hands* the thing that is good"—the craftsman's blessing.

(2) "Thou shalt eat the labour of thy hands. O well is it with thee and happy shalt thou be"—the countryman's blessing.

(3) The only pleasure which never palls is doing the work for which a man feels himself best fitted—the wise man's treasure.

The manor-houses of Old England are still capable of offering this treasure and these blessings to thousands. The chief fault of our educational system since the industrial revolution has been the neglect of country lore and practical manual work by the better educated or intellectual classes. Trained brains are nothing but a danger unless they work with trained hands to give them practical experience.

The New London Stage Productions

Reviewed by PHILIP PAGE

"*FLYING COLOURS.*"—With a bit more polish and a slicker production this revue at the Lyric Theatre would have flown to even more colourful heights. As it is, it is pretty good and certainly well above the average. With Miss Binnie Hale and Mr. Douglas Byng in the cast, furnished, as they are here, with worthy material, this could hardly fail to be so. Miss Hale appears as Lady Hamilton, as a servant girl in love with an R.A.F. officer; as Miss Florence Desmond; as Miss Evelyn Laye, and, which was far more important, as herself. Female impersonation being Mr. Byng's strong suit, he has been given (or, more probably, has insisted on) plenty of it. I did not like Mr. Jackie Hunter as an undertaker in deep mourning; simply because I have never been able to regard death as funny. Miss Hilde Palmer obviously has "oomph," and probably brains as well, and Miss Natasha Sokolova is an exquisite dancer.

Palladium.—The revival of "variety" at the Palladium after some years has resulted in a comparison in various quarters between a London music-hall programme of to-day and those of last-war, or pre-last-war, times. In every case it was in favour of the latter. In those days we had humour which, if it could be Rabelaisian, had a clean, healthy touch about it. Mr. Max Miller, always on the "blue" side, in this show established himself as the most suggestive comedian in the history of the London stage.

"Pink String and Sealing Wax."—Why this odd title for the not very new play at the Duke of York's Theatre? I did not hear a reference to either of these commodities in its three acts. Possibly the explanation is the success elsewhere of *Arsenic and Old Lace*, particularly since it is largely concerned with poison—this time strychnine. But whereas *Arsenic and Old Lace* is very funny, this is not. I must add, in all fairness, that it is not intended to be funny, that it is a well-constructed, if not very original, murder-drama, that it is interesting and will probably be a success. It is immaculately acted, notably by Miss Dorothy Hyson, Miss Iris Hoey and Mr. David Horne. And the scene is, of course, Brighton. Most plays just now seem to be about Brighton—*Brighton Rock*, *Lottie Dundass*, etc.—and there will probably be many more. Why?

ENTERTAINING the TROOPS

Famous Stage Stars who are Now Touring the Camps

GEORGE FORMBY, THE LANCASHIRE COMEDIAN, PERFORMS BEFORE A NORTH AFRICAN AUDIENCE. In an improvised theatre in the grounds of the 96th General Hospital at Maison Carree, George Formby entertains wounded British soldiers. The well-known stage and film star is, of course, accompanied by his wife, Beryl. His present tour of North Africa is expected to last for about eight weeks, and in some places it is planned that he should appear at as many as four shows a day

MAE CRAVEN AND VIVIEN LEIGH bathing at Sandy Bay beach at Gibraltar on their return from an Army theatrical tour of North Africa, Cairo and Malta

NOEL COWARD IN MALTA, with Pte. Rowlands of the Durham Light Infantry, who was wounded in Sicily. As part of his tour in the Middle East to entertain the troops, Noel Coward recently arrived in Malta. He gave a show at all the naval and military hospitals, and then visited in the wards those who were unable to leave their beds to see the performance

A QUINTET OF WELL-KNOWN LONDON ACTRESSES AT GIBRALTAR. These artistes have been touring North Africa, Cairo and Malta, where they have appeared in *Spring Party*. From left to right are: Beatrice Lillie, Kay Young, Vivien Leigh, Mae Craven and Dorothy Dickson: also amongst the party was Leslie Henson. The picture above was taken on Sandy Bay beach during a break in the tour and before the party went out again for a tour of gun-sites

THE R.A.F. PUT ON A SHOW OF THEIR OWN IN LONDON. The smart and attractive chorus of W.A.A.F. girls who took part in "This is the Gen," produced at the Phœnix Theatre last week

L.A.C.W. IRENE CUTTER, one of the principals, also responsible for the chorus dances. She was a member of the cast of "Me and My Gal"

L.A.C.W. SYLVIA MACHARDIE, who has been three years in the W.A.A.F., and who previously appeared in "Balalaika" and "Black Velvet"

Last week, at the Phœnix Theatre in London, the R.A.F. showed what it could do in the way of producing its own wartime revue. *This is the Gen* was originally produced, from amongst its own talent, by a Fighter Station in the Home Counties. The great majority of the artistes were amateurs, and the costumes and settings were all prepared by members of the R.A.F. and W.A.A.F. The chorus was not only good—it was amazingly pretty—and the general level of the whole show was very high. After performances at the Fighter Station, *This is the Gen* was put on for a five-day run in London in aid of the R.A.F. Benevolent Fund. Pictures of the W.A.A.F. chorus and two of the principals are given here

The World of Books—By Vernon Fane

BOOKS FOR DIVERSE TASTES

A Learned Treatise on Agricultural Conditions; An Eighteenth Century Scene; Robert Payne's Exotic Story of the Far East; A Muse in the Mediterannean; Gastronomic Successes with a Tin-opener

PROFESSOR N. GANGULEE has written an interesting short treatise on a subject which is of the greatest importance to us now, and should remain in that relation to our national life after the war. THE BATTLE OF THE LAND (Lindsay Drummond. 6s.) is an account of present farming conditions and of the improvements made by the Government to help British farmers. The author has covered concisely and in a short space the questions of arable farming, the mechanisation of farming, land reclamation and draining—an interesting subject in itself—agricultural labourers and their wages, livestock farming and the Women's Land Army.

In each case he has given a brief account of the poor conditions that existed before the war, and has shown the work in the matter of research and surveys that the Government is doing to better these conditions The author puts a particular emphasis on the vital importance of the Church in agricultural communities.

If one had a criticism it would be that more hard facts are not given, and that in such chapters as that on the housing conditions of agricultural workers one has the impression that the writer is edging shyly away from the subject. In dealing with a question that has aroused so much necessary discussion at the moment, and that has, in the discussion, exposed problems in need of such immediate remedy, it is oppressive to note that the author has turned aside from a detailed resumé of that remedy, and concentrated on the praise of a few hostels the Government has erected.

"MAJOR BARBARA" OF THE U.S.A.: Working as an orthopaedic specialist in the largest and best equipped Military Hospital in Britain is Major Barbara Stimson, first cousin of the U.S. Secretary of War. Held in high esteem by the medical profession when she was practising in her native city of New York, Major Barbara has won a similar regard from her British colleagues since she joined the R.A.M.C. in February 1942. She has been doing fine work among the war casualties of both sexes and from all arms of the Services.

In this, Professor Gangulee's book seems to be attempting to re-patch rather than to rebuild a situation, but apart from that, he has written a book that is both timely, well-informed and attractively presented

MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS (Michael Joseph. 8s. 6d.) is the first of Mrs. Norah Lofts' novels that I have read, and it came to me in the nature of a discovery. Here is a writer, whose work I will follow in the future with the greatest expectation, who really has the rare quality of vitality—a quality which pervades this book, and which is far more important than the sombre and slightly melodramatic story itself.

This covers a period of twelve hours in a country inn during the eighteenth century, and concerns the fortunes of the inn-keeper's two daughters Myrtle, lovely and muddle-headed, is in love with a son of the local gentry, and Harriet, whose face has been disfigured by smallpox, manages the affairs of the inn with complete efficiency.

In the short space of time the author has allotted to her story many things, generally of a spectacular nature, happen. A distraught widow, who has come to the inn to commit suicide, finds sanity and hope in adopting the unwanted child of one of the servants. The little drudge Effie, driven almost out of her mind by the small part she has played in helping with the secret birth, finds peace in confession. Myrtle saves herself with more expedition than grace from seduction in a hayloft, and wakes up in the morning sadder, wiser and notably less muddle-headed.

An old shipmate, one of the eighteenth century's prominent sadists one would imagine, arrives to blackmail the innkeeper for all his savings and his daughter, Harriet. Harriet at the same time discovers that she is not his child, which gives her a curious new affection for him, and forgets her obsession about her face long enough to poison the blackmailer.

Never, in other words, a dull moment, but Mrs. Lofts handles it all with such vividness and such spirit that she lifts it into the realm of genuinely distinguished fiction.

Mr. Robert Payne has a fine and romantic sense of the exotic, particularly as it exists, or used to exist, in the Malay Peninsula. His present novel, DAVID AND ANNA (Heinemann. 10s. 6d.) is set in Singapore in the years immediately before this war. Here again is the story of two daughters, but in a very different setting. Anna and Teresa are the daughters of a Portuguese jeweller and his Chinese wife, lovely Eurasians with Chinese eyes and olive skins and streaming black hair.

Teresa is a devout Catholic and only fourteen when Anna marries David, a British rubber planter, who takes her away to his up-country estate. Their life is serene and contented, for they are as much in love with the simple people and their rich legend-haunted country as with one another. After some years Teresa visits them, intending to see what it is like to be married, to live together, and to love before she goes into a convent.

David is overwhelmed by her beauty and they become lovers, but before long she calmly goes away resolved on her vocation. Anna has known of David's infatuation, which in time he forgets, but she never speaks of it—it is understandable to love Teresa. They resume their tranquil life in the luxuriant forest, but before the story closes Japanese warplanes have droned overhead.

This is a slow, languorous tale in which Malayan life is described in painstaking and poetic detail. The very *tempo* of the writing seems to reflect the heat, the indolence and the good humour of the people, who move so deliberately through the story. The plot itself has great simplicity; the only intricacies and decorations are in the descriptive writing, which has great sensibility.

MLLE. EVE CURIE ARRIVES IN LONDON TO JOIN THE FIGHTING FRENCH: The daughter of the famous French scientist (whose name will always be associated with the discovery of radium) was deprived of her nationality after the fall of France and her property was confiscated. She escaped and made her way to America. Now she is back in London, and has joined the French A.T.S. Well known as a journalist, author and lecturer, she has visited both Libya and the Russian front

A short new collection of poems by Flight-Lieutenant John Pudney, the third of his volumes of war poetry, has been called SOUTH OF FORTY (John Lane. 2s. 6d.). The poems were written while he was on active service, and they show, through a poet's eyes, some of the phases of war in the Mediterranean. We recognise here the same directness and lyrical simplicity that has distinguished his work before. His *Landscape, Western Desert*, is typical:

> "Winds carve this land
> And velvet whorls of sand
> Annul footprint and grave
> Of lover, fool, and knave.
> Briefly the vetches bloom,
> In the blind desert room,
> When humble, bright, and brave
> Met common doom."

Another poem, where he has attempted a ballad with a faintly Kiplingesque flavour, is less successful, but little poems such as *Fleet Exercises* have the authenticity that battle and youth and the clear flash of talent may produce together.

In accordance with their excellent custom, the Bristol Public Libraries have published their own list of reading on a selected subject. This time the choice is town and country planning, and in a well-produced little pamphlet of twenty pages, REBUILDING BRITAIN, they give a list of some hundreds of books all available to readers from their libraries.

As usual, the books cover a wide and catholic range, from the Scott-Uthwatt reports to John Betjeman's *Ghastly Good Taste*. They should suggest lines for reading even to those readers who are too distant to avail themselves of the resources of the Bristol Libraries!

One trouble about reading a play on the relationship between Essex and Elisabeth is that as an emotional, an historical or purely a dramatic gambit, the subject has been treated so often that one's interest is worn almost threadbare. Mr. Edward Thompson's title, ESSEX AND ELISABETH (Gollancz. 5s.), has, however, much to recommend it, in addition to the order in which he places these two famous names.

The first of the four acts shows Essex in favour after he has defeated Spain at sea; the second, his rise to power and Elisabeth's anxiety lest he destroy himself in an effort to usurp the throne; the third, his disastrous expedition to Ireland; and the final act, the great Queen's last days as she broods over the death of Essex.

It is not, however, a play that gains from being read. It deserves, and certainly needs, to be approached visually as well, with all the warmth and colour that are inseparable from our ideas of this period.

The likeable sleuth who appears in many of Mr. Cecil Freeman Gregg's thrillers is back again in TWO DIED AT THREE (Methuen. 8s 6d.). He is Detective-Inspector Higgins, a sharp-witted clod-hopper combining Holmes and Watson in one figure, and he ambles gently through this story ejaculating "Jerusalem!" whenever he finds a corpse, and "Jerusalem, my happy home!" whenever he finds something really out of the way.

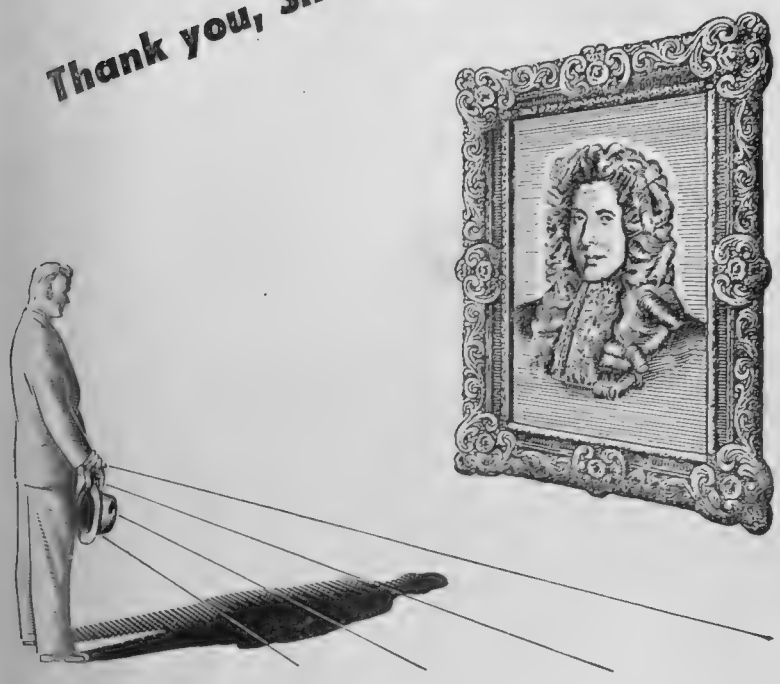
Needless to say, since the unexpected has a way of turning up in Mr. Gregg's work, both these exclamations get a good deal of use. Corpses, both shot and stabbed, are con[illegible] and diaries, strings of [illegible] blackmailers are all i[illegible] a plot which suffer[illegible] casually strung togeth[illegible] than meticulously c[illegible]

"MRS. BRITAIN, JUNIOR." Mrs. Muriel Smith, a twenty-six-year-old bus conductress, has been chosen for this part in an exhibition of the "Two Mrs. Britains" to be held in Piccadilly Circus. Her story (and that of "Mrs. Britain, Senior"—a factory worker of the last war) is to be told against a background of world events

Accurately reflecting the trend of the times, Mr. Ambrose Heath has collected some practical recipes and presented them to us as GOOD DISHES FROM TINNED FOOD (Faber. 3s. 6d.) Here we may follow him while he delves into the mysteries of "various American tinned luncheon meats called by various peculiar monosyllabic names."

Sometimes, it is true, he is seized with a fine pre-war frenzy and writes lightly of such things as half-a-cup of cream, or of eggs in the plural. But, in general, his recipes are restrained to the bounds of possibility and although I have not yet tried any of them out, they make succulent reading.

Thank you, Sir Robert . . .



Curious, isn't it, that Sir Robert Boyle (1627-1691) is helping to win the war, to-day. Don't ask us how — we're not allowed to say! But we can tell you how Sir Robert will help to "win the peace . . ."

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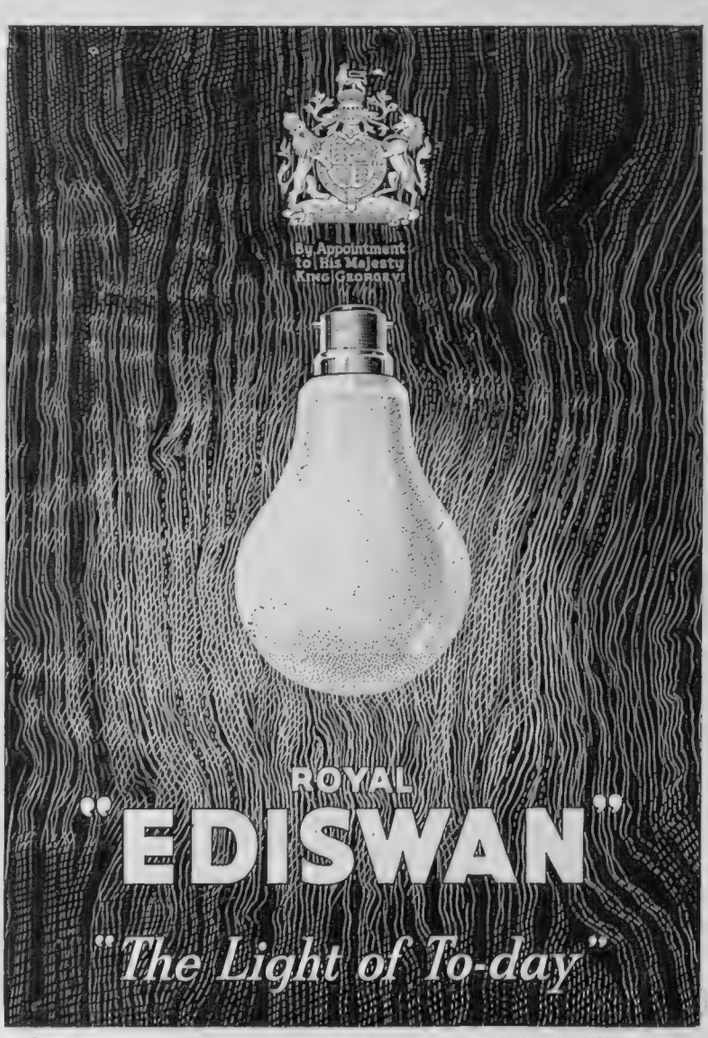

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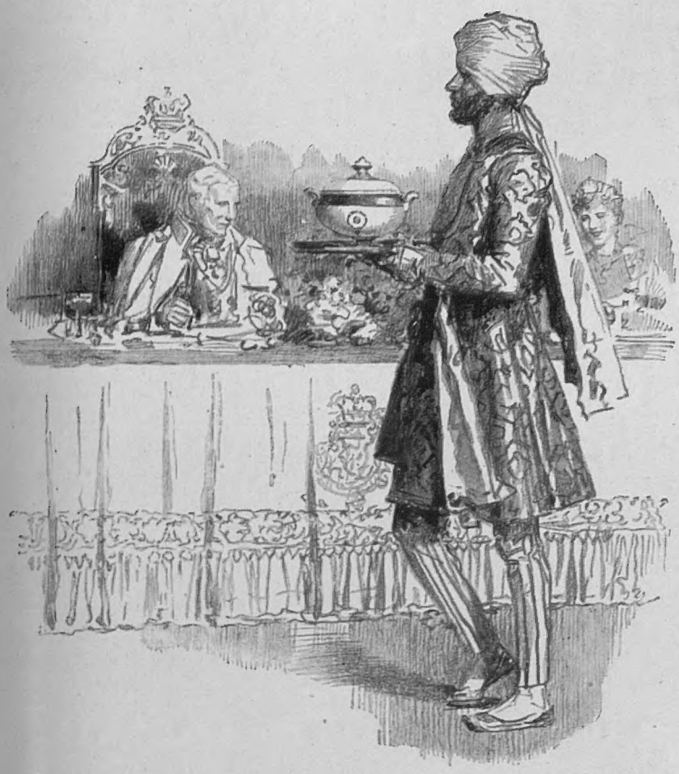

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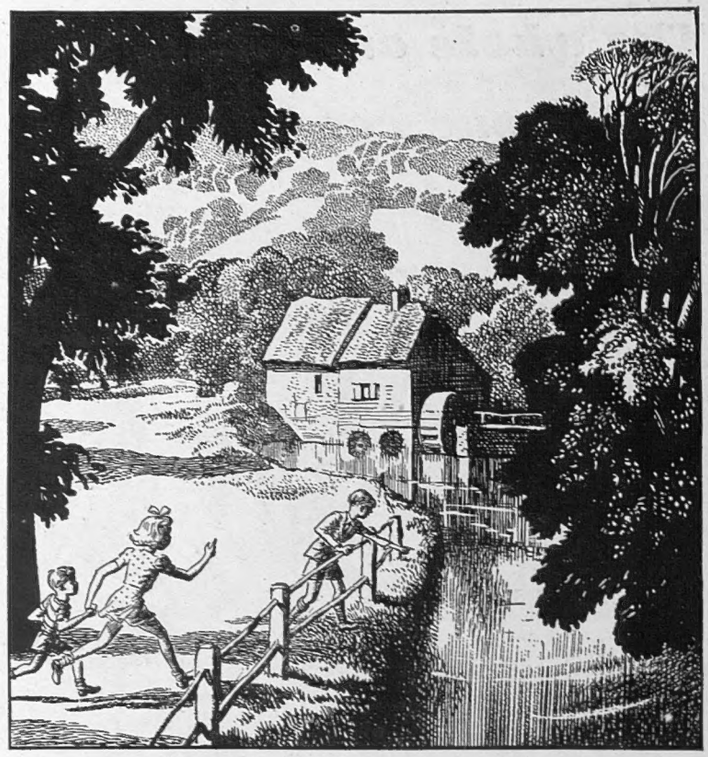

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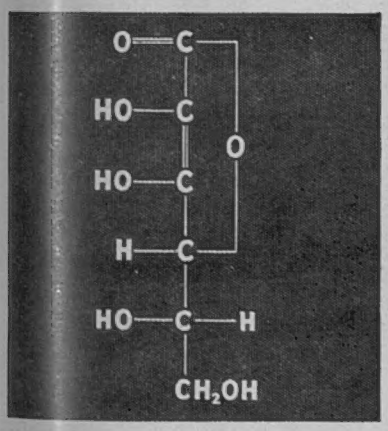

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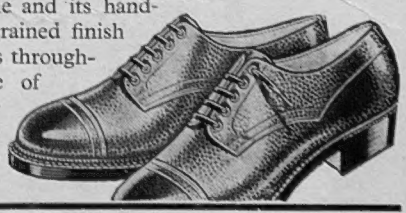

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